

EXPOSITORY PREACHING: SOME QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

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RESUMO

Esta variedade de pregação normalmente demanda uma boa dose de pesquisa acadêmica e, por causa disso, representa também um desafio no momento da apresentação, visto que, em geral, os pregadores precisam adaptar as informações aos ouvintes. Contudo, é recompensador considerar seus benefícios em termos de informação compartilhada, seu conteúdo bíblico, a aplicação contextualizada à audiência.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Sermão Expositivo. Pesquisa Acadêmica. Conteúdo Bíblico.

ABSTRACT:

This variety of preaching normally demands a good deal on academic research and because of it represents also a delivery challenge for preachers in adapting all the resulting information to the hearers. However, it is rewarding to consider its benefits in terms of appropriated imparted information, its bible context in the exegesis process and, probably one of the most difficult achievement for any sermon type, specially for the expository: the bullet(s) contextualized application(s) for the audience.

KEYWORDS: Expository Preaching. Academic Research. Biblical Content.

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IT'S ORIGIN AND THE WINDING ELABORATION PROCESS

Besides the narrative way of sermonizing, expository preaching is perhaps the oldest form that grew up in its outline *corpus* since the second century AD. According to Perry (1990, p. 19-20), Origen (184-254) was the first expository potter in this kind of sermon making process. The American Treatise on Preaching produced by Eben - Ezer in 1834 was probably the first homiletic manual in including the expository discourse in U.S (op. cit., p. 87-89).

Defining the expository sermon, Robinson (1980, p. 20) defines it as the communication of a biblical truth, derived and transmitted through a historic, grammatical and literary study of a contextualized bible fragment. This biblical portion is applied first by the Holy Spirit to the sermonizer's experience and then, to the hearers. The previous explanation reminds that expository classification emphasizes more the content of the message than the form in which this preaching is delivered. MacArthur (1992, p. 222) coincides with Robinson that, due to the investigation and content of this sermon, the expository preaching model is exegetic. Therefore, the preacher must follow certain rules for the interpretation of the text. All of the investigation ensures a respectful attitude toward the passage content and its context. This is one reason why some authors call this sermon classification as "contextual preaching" (HORTON, 1963, p. 14).

As most of us agree, expository messages are not the only classification to utilize in the pulpit. Other taxonomies are useful and important if they are biblical. Whitsell (1950, p. 39) adds that the biblical sermon is not confined just to one method of preaching. Actually, any sermon model, if the message is extracted from the Bible and based on it, is worthy to be called biblical.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

Concerning the preparation of the expository sermon, the amount of collected data can be subjected to some questions that will help to its outline fluency: before the knowledge recollection is finished, is it possible to identify the core or the central theme from the isolated bible section or *pericopa*? With a big amount report in the outline, the preacher's delivery may produce a homiletic indigestion and putting the audience in the "chasing of many concept rabbits in the woods of too much" or inclusive, they might get shock and disconnected. The homiletician will not fulfill the mission as an expository messenger if the sermon only transmits mere knowledge. Actually, the proper quantity of content must be like a ladder's steps in it. Each step should choose and unifying the elaboration process and applying the truth (s) that will serve as a coordinated step up to each phase of the sermon, climaxing its purpose and then step down through the conclusion and appeal. In some cases, on what expository sermon is concern, the chosen *pericopa* might have the outline-steps to feed and form the sermon-skeleton. The amount of academic *savia* bottled in the outline, could also indicate that would be necessary to elaborate a second or even a third sermon in order to balance the sermon's duration and properly procure the congregation learning. White (1885) admonishes on this respects when she suggests in dividing the excessive content through more than one preaching for a better audience's reception and assimilation.

Another question to consider is: How many passages do the chosen *pericopa* should clasp? This is important because the number of verses in the selected portion might change the nomenclature of the sermon type. Bresee (1997, p. 29-30) indicates that you're able to distinguish the difference between an expository preaching from one textual simply by the quantity of Bible verses treated. This same author proposes that a textual outline will comprise one section of one or two verses meanwhile

an expository presentation will retain three or more.

One anti-expository obstacle to defeat by the sermonizer is the considerable amount of time for in the elaboration for this kind of sermon. Any biblical sermon, no matter its type, requires labor and a systematic study in extracting biblical gems and to apply them to the audience. Expository sermons, however, demand more attention to the erudite resource. Probably, due to this limitative circumstance, Bird (1986, p. 34) declares that this sermon type is a species in danger of extinction.

There are good reasons why preachers must be in touch with this classification. There are a good amount of biblical passages requiring an expository approach. The appropriated interpretation for those verses might justify such exegetical tool. On this particular, Broadus (1979, p. 153, 154 – 167) explains that numerous passages of the Bible are not understood and there are biblical teachings that are not applied correctly. For this reason, preaching besides to be persuasive and convincing, must be instructive. To be effective, the expository sermon must thrive in this double challenging arena of instruction and persuasion. This last goal to achieve (persuasion) is related to the application(s) that come out of the central theme(s) for the sermon. The reason for regarding the central theme and application is briefly analyzed next.

The last question to discuss briefly is: How many central theme(s) and application(s) bullets are going to be in your expository barrel throughout your sermon? As it is comprehensible, the more use of them, the more concise and comprised you got to be for covering every one. Another serious responsibility associated to the previous question is bringing the Bible past to the present. It is a real challenge that demands much study. The biblical yesterday must be brought in today's world. That requires in adapting historic, grammar and sometimes, archaeological context to actual human needs. The fast pace of this postmodern era requires a biblical explanation with a practical application and invitation for gripping

hope.

The amount of bullets is a matter of certain debate. Robinson (2001, p. 33) considers the presence of various central theme applications throughout the sermon as birdshot. For Him, this type of homiletic ammunition does not target a specific need or problem solution but it spreads out just minor help for the audience. On the other side of the spectrum, Perry (1986. p. 16, 22, 50, 119-149) and Miller (1994, p. 56) point that more than one central theme with applications throughout the sermon can also benefit the hearers. In so many cities and towns of Western society, for instance, life is living like mile a minute and caught usually in the rush of multiple crises. A reasonable number of central themes information through a quantity of application bullets could target different hearts needs. The number will depend in the content extent of the *pericopa*. Three would be an adequate number to thrive with. In the one bullet sermon, the central theme will make all the application be magnetized to it. On regards the central theme(s) is crucial the content is submitted to the dominant thought(s) of the passage. The homiletic application pursues to make theory become alive. Other aspect that hinders the sermon purpose is that sometimes preachers are too much distracted and entangled discussing the problem(s) in the sermon. The practical and faith positive solution(s) to face and confront adverse circumstances is what congregations want to hear. This is the part that deserves special care and treatment in any sermon classification.

CONCLUSION

The expository preaching provides an important academic development, because the preacher and his audience will grow deeper in knowledge, Bible exploration and doctrinal affirmation. In a world where Bible truth is considered as a relative literature genre with its meaning circumscribed to a particular community's thought, the expository preaching

enhances the veracity of Scriptures in an academic way, deploying also contextualized and practical application(s) for today's needs.

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