

PR2510 – FOUNDATIONS OF BIBLICAL PREACHING

Luther Seminary – Spring Semester 2009

“...what the people need above all things is the Word of God.”

Martin Luther

Letter to George Spalatin

September 9, 1521

Instructors:

Karoline Lewis
NW210G, ext. 420

klewis001@luthersem.edu

David Lose
NW210B, ext. 455

DLose@luthersem.edu

Course Description:

This course introduces the fundamentals of preaching with a goal toward developing in students the capacity for transformative proclamation for the sake of the life and mission of the church. With close attention given to biblical exegesis; theology; the sermon's language, imagery, and design; and the basics of effective delivery, this course helps students develop interpretive, theological, homiletical, and practical disciplines that will inform and shape their preaching and lay the groundwork for lifelong learning and improvement.

Course Objectives

In order to develop students' ability to craft and deliver transformative biblical sermons, the course pursues the following learning objectives:

- 1) Apprehending the Gospel as a distinct message with theological, relational, liturgical, and rhetorical dimensions.
- 2) Developing proficiency in the primary elements of preaching as a distinct genre of oral communication: a) exegetical study, b) development and preparation of the sermon, c) attending to congregational context, and d) oral execution.
- 3) Maturing in one's self-understanding as one called to proclaim and confess the faith publicly in the context of Christian worship by maintaining respect for the congregation, fidelity to the tradition, and integrity to one's own voice and identity.

Required Textbooks:

Bible, NRSV

Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2005).

Barbara Brown Taylor, *The Preaching Life* (Boston: Cowley Publications, 1993).

Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1977).

Additional required readings are available on E-Reserve and are referenced in the **Course Schedule** below.

Recommended Books (good additions to the preacher’s library; not required for class)

Jana Childers, ed., *Birthing the Sermon* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001).
Gerhard Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991).
Justo L. Gonzalez and Catherine G. Gonzalez, *The Liberating Pulpit* (Wipf & Stock, 2003).
Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997).
Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999).

Course Expectations:

1. Attendance at all class sessions is required. More than two unexcused absences from either plenary or lab sessions will automatically result in a Marginal grade.
2. Completion of all reading in preparation for class discussion.
3. Class participation, both in large group and small group discussion, in particular, candid, encouraging, and thoughtful feedback during sermon discussion.
4. Each student will preach five sermons. The sermon cover page, exegetical report, and sermon manuscript are due on the date each sermon is preached.

Course Evaluation:

The “Pass/Marginal/Fail” grading system means just that. In order to pass the class, **ALL** work must be completed and receive a satisfactory mark. A “P” will note a passing grade. Unsatisfactory work, failure to turn in assignments, or two unexcused absences from class sessions/labs will result in a Marginal or Fail mark. The “Letter Grade” option means that all work will be graded by scale (90-100, A- to A, etc.).

Special Needs: Students with learning disabilities or related needs that might have an impact on the execution and completion of the assignments should set up a meeting with the instructors at the beginning of the term to discuss necessary modifications in the course requirements.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE

February 9, 2009

LAB #1

Why Preach?

Preaching Schedules/Stories

WEEK TWO

February 16, 2009

Preaching and the Word of God

Reading Assignment:

Long, *Witness*, 52-68

Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, 3-39

Luther, “What to Look for in the Gospels” (E-Reserve)

LAB #2 **Retelling a Biblical Narrative**

WEEK THREE
February 23, 2009

Engaging the Biblical Text

Reading Assignment:
Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 63-98
Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, 54-66
Hinkle, "Exegesis for Textual Preaching" (E-Reserve)

LAB #3 **SERMON #1**
TEXT: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32, March 14, 2010

Preacher #1 _____

Preacher #2 _____

Preacher #3 _____

WEEK FOUR
March 2, 2009

Telling the Truth Twice: Preaching Law & Gospel

Reading Assignment:
Buechner, *Telling the Truth*
Lose, "Words that Do Things" (E-Reserve)
Luther, "On the Spirit and the Letter" (E-Reserve)

LAB #4 **SERMON #1**
TEXT: Luke 7:36-8:3, June 13, 2010

Preacher #4 _____

Preacher #5 _____

Preacher #6 _____

WEEK FIVE
March 9, 2009

Focus & Function

Reading Assignment:
Long, *Witness*, 99-116

LAB #5 **SERMON #2**
TEXT: Mark 7:24-37, September 6, 2009

Preacher #1 _____

Preacher #2 _____

Preacher #3 _____

WEEK SIX
March 16, 2009

Sermon Design

Reading Assignment:
Long, *Witness*, 117-171

LAB #6

SERMON #2

TEXT: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21, Ash Wednesday, 2010

Preacher #4 _____

Preacher #5 _____

Preacher #6 _____

WEEK SEVEN
March 23, 2009

The Sanctified Imagination

Reading Assignment:
Long, *Witness*, 198-224
Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, 40-53

LAB #7

SERMON #3

TEXT: John 2:1-11, January 17, 2010

Preacher #1 _____

Preacher #2 _____

Preacher #3 _____

WEEK EIGHT
March 30, 2009

Openings and Closings

Reading Assignment:
Long, *Witness*, 172-197

LAB #8

SERMON #3

TEXT: John 21:1-19, April 18, 2010

Preacher #4 _____

Preacher #5 _____

Preacher #6 _____

WEEK NINE

April 6, 2009

Preaching the Old Testament

Reading Assignment:

Ellen Davis, "The Art of Astonishing: Old Testament Preaching" (E-Reserve)

Fred Craddock, "The Gospel of God" (E-Reserve)

LAB #9

SERMON #4

TEXT: I Kings 17:8-16 (17-24), June 6, 2010

Preacher #1 _____

Preacher #2 _____

Preacher #3 _____

APRIL 13, 2009

NO CLASS

EASTER BREAK

WEEK TEN

April 20, 2009

Preaching Biblical Genres

Reading Assignment:

Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (E-Reserve)

LAB #10

SERMON #4

TEXT: II Kings 2:1-2, 6-14, June 27, 2010

Preacher #4 _____

Preacher #5 _____

Preacher #6 _____

WEEK ELEVEN

April 27, 2009

The Contexts of Our Preaching

Reading Assignment:

Long, *Witness*, 233-244

Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, 81-91

Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*
(E-Reserve)

LAB #11

SERMON #5

TEXT: James 3:1-12, September 13, 2009

Preacher #1 _____

Preacher #2 _____

Preacher #3 _____

WEEK TWELVE

May 4, 2009

Preaching & Worship

Reading Assignment:

Charles Rice, "Preaching as a Liturgical Act" (E-Reserve)

Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, 67-80

LAB #12

SERMON #5

TEXT: Philippians 1:3-11, December 6, 2009

Preacher #4 _____

Preacher #5 _____

Preacher #6 _____

WEEK THIRTEEN

May 11, 2009

The Preacher's Voice

Reading Assignment:

Turner and Hudson, *Saved from Silence*, 99-115 (E-Reserve)

PR2510 Foundations of Biblical Preaching

Exegetical Outline for Preaching

K. Lewis/D.Lose

This is an annotated version of the exegetical outline you will be completing for each sermon. Not every question will need to be addressed, but use the questions provided for each step as starting points for your work with the text. For further explanation of the steps, see Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, Chapter 3, pp. 60-77.

Encountering the Biblical Text: Read, Feel, Question, React

1. First Impressions, Past Encounters, and Communal Response
What are your first impressions of the text? What questions does it raise? Do past experiences of the text come to mind? In what context(s) have you heard this text before? What difference does this make for your initial reactions to the text? What issues will the text raise in your community of faith?

A Close Reading of the Biblical Text: Steps in the Process

2. Establish a Reliable Translation of the Text
Set a translation of the text (attach to the outline) either by providing your own translation or comparing at least two standard translations of the Bible. Note several places where the translations differ and consider why this is the case. What difference does it make in for the meaning of the passage?
3. Consider the Language of the Text
Examine the language of the text. Consult a Bible dictionary/lexicon for explanation of words and unfamiliar terms. What words seem to be important for this text? What possible meanings are implied? Look up at least one word in a concordance. Are there words that your author particularly likes? Does the language of the passage echo previous parts of the book? Does it foreshadow any later parts? Do terms or ideas appear in this passage that may be thematic in the book as a whole? That is, does this passage reflect particular themes or the theology of the book?
4. Consider the Shape of the Text
What is the text's genre or form and how does it shape the passage? What is the movement or development within the passage? How does the argument or rhetoric unfold? How is each sentence related to the next one? Here, a basic outline will help to determine the structure.
5. Comparing with Texts of Similar Material
If the passage occurs in the other Gospels, compare and contrast your account with the account in the other Gospels. How does your author tell the story? What can you tell from the comparison about the author's concerns about this

story? If your story is not in any of the other Gospels, reflect on why it is in yours. Why does it make sense in your Gospel? What is its function? How does it connect with the thematic and theological thrust of your Gospel?

Reading Contextually: Finding the Passage in its Place

6. Examine the Literary Context

Consider where the text begins and ends. Do the boundaries of the text set by the lectionary need to be reconsidered? Consider the literary context of the text. Where in the book does the passage occur? What precedes? What follows? Is it part of a unit in the book? Has the author prepared us for this text? How? What is the role of this text in the larger argument of the book? Why is the passage here rather than elsewhere?

7. Consider Historical, Social, Religious, Political Backgrounds

Here you are asking, What aspects of the historical, social, religious, or political milieu of the Old/New Testament times shed light on the interpretation of this passage?

8. Consult the Commentaries

This step has been postponed because consultation with commentaries at too early a stage can short-circuit your own work with the text. Engage the text directly and then enter into a conversation with the commentaries as an active participant, not just as an observer. Learn to pose your own questions to the text and to answer them by using basic references. When you have done your own work, consult the commentaries as a supplement and confirmation or corrective to your own interpretation. Be aware of the kind of commentary to which you are referring (critical, devotional, or homiletical) and its approach (e.g., historical/critical, literary/narrative, etc.) and the kinds of issues it will then address. *Consult at least two sources and cite them accordingly.*

Moving Toward the Sermon

1. Consider the Claim of the Text

What is God doing in this text? What is God's particular word to us in this text? What do you think this passage is about/means/doing? Or, what is the claim of the text? Think about the claim of the text through theological categories. That is, what is God up to, who is God (theology); how does the text contribute to an understanding of the person and work of Christ (Christology); an understanding of salvation (soteriology); a notion of the end times (eschatology); human nature or the human condition (e.g. forgiveness, sin, etc.); the Church (ecclesiology); or the work of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology). And then, consider what this

passage means for our context. That is, what does this text have to say about living life before God; relating to fellow Christians; achieving social justice in society? being a disciple of Jesus?, etc.

Reading Contextually: Finding the Passage in its Place

5. Examine the Literary Context

6. Consider Historical, Social, Religious, Political Backgrounds

7. Consult the Commentaries

Moving Toward the Sermon - Considering the Claim of the Text