

BIBLICAL EXEGESIS AND EXPOSITION¹

by
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Introduction

What is the relationship between exegesis and exposition?
What is Bible exposition or expository preaching?

This article gives a method for moving from exegesis to expository preaching. Think of a tower with several spigots: high, medium, and low. Exegesis is at the top; exposition is at the bottom. The exegete deals with Greek and Hebrew syntax, hermeneutics, theological arguments, and so forth. Exegesis (the high spigot) discovers the text's meaning. The pulpit is for teaching our congregations. A high spigot spills our exegetical work before the congregation. The medium or low ones permit teaching to flow from a level more comprehensible for the flock. The objective is to Communicate, not to drown anyone with our depth.

A pastor should start with exegesis of the text, before seeking to communicate and illustrate it. One cannot communicate Bible exposition clearly and accurately without first discovering what the text means. A pastor must know the passage's exegetical truth, but should communicate that in expository words. Exegetical study uses the high spigot, exposition opens a lower spigot. When pastors do not understand this—I speak as one who has made this mistake, and it is a mistake—they make a premature assessment: “I taught twenty people for six months, giving them good stuff! Now, we are down to two, proving how negative people are to doctrine.” Are there people who are negative to Bible doctrine? Certainly, but pastors ought to go back to a checklist

¹ Editor's note: This article was Chet McCalley's message to the National Teaching Pastors' Conference, October 8, 1990. One week before the May, 2000, NTPC, the Lord called Chet home. Though he is now at home with the Lord, we lost a good friend and an outstanding expositor. In memory of Chet, we replayed the tape of his 1990 message ten years later during the first session of the May, 2000, NTPC. This article comes from a posthumously edited transcription. It is our privilege to share it with our readers.

and ask, “Does my study move from exegesis down to expository teaching?” If not, we pastors certainly bear the blame. The pastor is responsible both for teaching the nine-year old and his parents, is he not? Yes, indeed, a shephard cares for lambs, not just adult sheep.

Exegesis: Exposition's Foundation

Upon what does expository teaching rest? The foundation of exposition is *exegesis*, but what does that word mean? It is the *process* of determining the meaning of a text of Scripture, the word of God.

It is important to understand “determining the meaning.” Many simply advocate reading the Bible and blindly asking, “How does this apply to me?” Application, though essential, is the last step. Moreover, one must base it upon the text’s meaning to the original audience, in the language and the culture in which it was spoken. The objective meaning (apart from a reader's subjective response to it) must be the focus. Exegesis is to lead forth, to let the word speak for itself. Imposing a sermon on the Bible (not letting it speak) is *eisegesis* (reading into God's word). The basis of exposition is the meaning that comes *from* Scripture.

The word *exegesis* (or *exegete*) occurs six times in the New Testament. No lexicon or Greek dictionary determines the meaning of *exegesis*. When teachers drilled us in using dictionaries, I asked, “How does Webster know everything?” No dictionary is greater than its contributors’ word studies.

To illustrate, saying “I have a *shibglub*” does not many clues. Picture something that a pastor might have. *Context* can eliminate many options. For example, “A *shibglub* is in my pocket.” That narrows the possibilities. A *shibglub* must be small enough to fit in a pocket. Contextual usage defines words. *Usage* is the key! An item larger than a pocket could not be a *shibglub* (unless it can come in different sizes).

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Next, “I took the *shibglub* out of my pocket to wipe my forehead.” Contextually it must resemble a handkerchief. These three uses of this word eliminate many other possibilities. *Usage* always determines meaning. The pastor’s best friend is the concordance (whether on paper or in electronic form).

His best friend is not the lexicon. Consider the word *exegetis* (or *exegete*). Usage of this word-group in Scripture is more useful than any definition that a dictionary may offer. Context is the key. What is the Biblical concept for the word ἐξηγέομαι (*exēgeomai* “to exegete”)?

Luke 24:35

*And they (began) **to relate** their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.*²

Two disciples met Jesus on the road to Emmaus. After walking with them, He broke bread and they recognized Him. The disciples *began to relate* something to others. The word *relate* is *exegete* (*exēgeomai*). The New King James Version translates the word as *told*: *And they **told** about the things that had happened on the road. . . .*³ The disciples began to *tell* or *relate* their experiences on the road and how they recognized Jesus during a meal. Exegesis deals with objective truth, because what they said was true. They began to *exegete* or tell about their objective experiences. It refers to explaining objective truth.

John 1:18

*No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He **has explained** Him.*

² Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations are from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB), copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1994 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

³ *New King James Version*. (Nashville: Nelson, 1982). Used by permission.

The *New American Standard Bible* translates the verb as *has explained*. The *New King James Version* assigns the meaning *told* in Luke, but now uses *declared* in John 1:18, . . . *He has declared Him*. Did Christ give a subjective or objective explanation of the Father? Again, this is objective truth!

Acts 10:8

. . . and after he ***had explained*** everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

An angel explained to Cornelius that he should arrange for Peter to meet him. Cornelius gathered like-minded men together after the angel *had explained* [*exegeted*] *everything to them*. . . .

Acts 15:12, 14

*And all the multitude kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they **were relating** what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. . . . "Simeon **has related** how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.*

The *New King James Version* uses *declaring* and *declared* for *relating* and *related*. Paul and Barnabas *relate* or *declare* (*exegete*) certain facts at the Jerusalem Council (verse 12). Paul related objective signs and wonders? Simon Peter does likewise in verse 14. Peter *related/exegeted* objective facts. Exegeting a text explains objective truth or fact.

Acts 21:19

*And after he had greeted them, he (began) **to relate** one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.*

Again, *the New King James Version* uses a slightly different translation: . . . he ***told*** in detail those things which God had done

among the Gentiles through his ministry. Paul objectively *related* or *told* (*exegeted*) what God had done among the Gentiles during his evangelistic journeys.

Conclusion

Exegesis refers to the explaining, declaring, telling, or relating of objective truth.⁴ Now, what elements of exegesis are necessary for an accurate textual meaning?

Elements of Exegesis

Language

Why should a pastor examine the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament? The strongest claim made by the Bible is this: *Thus saith the Lord* (“This is God speaking”). The Old Testament uses similar expressions about 3800 times. The reminder that “This is God’s word” appears an average of four times per page.⁵ The fact that Scripture is His word means, even dictates, that we ought to be careful and precise in studying it. Exegesis requires examining original languages.

Helpful tools enable interpreters to know what the grammars say about biblical passages. Timothy Owings indexed eight

⁴ If our congregations spoke Greek and Hebrew fluently, we could communicate exegesis in the original language—as in the above examples. However, our congregations speak English. The form of English that they use is not the same as the technical vocabulary of the original language tools. Thus, we face a problem that is analogous to Nehemiah 8:8, where Ezra *give(s) the sense* of the Law (written in Hebrew) to returned exiles whose Hebrew had started slipping. Although one could call the whole process *exegesis*, modern parlance regards *exposition* as *to give the sense*. The modern use of *exegesis* is narrower than the biblical meaning, but is not contrary to it.

⁵ This assumes an Old Testament with about 950 pages. Page size, print size, and the number of notes affect the number of pages required.

major grammars.⁶ He enables one to consult quickly even major grammar's analysis of a passage. For Matthew 1:1, he says, "MHT III 167; ROB 780, 793, 795"⁷ (Moulton-Howard-Turner, *Grammar*, vol. 3, page 167, and Robertson, *Grammar*, pages 780, 793, and 795). Only two of the eight grammars directly refer to this verse. Saying, "I consulted every major grammar's analysis of this passage" is impressive—unless people know that this book exists (leaving the aura of scholarly dignity intact). Unfortunately, lack of interest caused this gem to go out of print. This is a tragic commentary on how few pastors now exegete.

My first Greek class (at age seventeen) motivated me to do scholarly work, but to avoid parading it. Students always made it a point to be early to that class (a five hour course), not to get on the front row, but the last row. Dr. Brunner, the beginning Greek teacher, had been an assistant to A. T. Robertson, so no one wanted to answer his questions in class. He was too awe-inspiring. He did not need to carry a New Testament, because he had memorized it. Good texts, grammars, and lexical tools exist for the rest of us! Our congregations need teaching that results from solid scholarship, but we should not make our abilities seem

⁶ F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); J. A. Brooks and C. L. Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1979); H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1927); C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1959); J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*; vol. 1, *Prolegomena*, 3d ed., by J. H. Moulton (Edinburgh: Clark, 1908); vol. 2, *Accidence*, by J. H. Moulton (Edinburgh: Clark, 1929); vol. 3, *Syntax*, by N. Turner (Edinburgh: Clark, 1963); and vol. 4, *Style*, by Nigel Turner (Edinburgh: Clark, 1976); A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923); A. T. Robertson and W. H. Davis, *A New Short Grammar of the Greek Testament*, 10th ed. (New York: Harper, 1931); M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples*, ed. and trans. Joseph Smith (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1963).

⁷ Timothy Owings, *A Cumulative Index to New Testament Greek Grammars* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 13.

unapproachable. Rather than intimidating the flock, we should challenge and equip them for the work of ministry.

Expository preaching never implies sacrificing exegesis. For those who share our belief in the absolute authority of the Scripture, the accuracy of little things argues strongly for careful study. The gospel record sometimes focuses on little things. Consider Matthew 26:16: *So from that time he (Judas) sought opportunity **to betray** Him.* Matthew consistently uses παραδίδομι (*paradidōmi*, “to betray”) to describe the act of Judas in betraying Jesus (cf. Matthew 10:4; 26:16, 21, 46; 27:3). The one who betrays (in Matthew) is always singular.

After the death and resurrection of Christ, Peter makes a fascinating point (Acts 3:13a). He also uses *paradidōmi*, but this passage is different. Peter preaches and says,

*The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, the one whom you (plural) **delivered up** (*paradidōmi*) and disowned. . . .*

You delivered up is the same word, but it is a second person plural *you!*⁸ Whereas Matthew spoke of betrayal as the singular act of Judas, Peter addresses the nation saying, “You (plural).” In one sense the act uniquely belongs to Judas, but it is also the whole nation’s responsibility. A change to the plural reveals this. Pastors ought to respect the word of God, painstakingly interpreting its words. Many other similar examples exist,⁹ so language belongs to the elements of exegesis.

⁸ English no longer distinguishes *you* (singular) and *ye* (plural), except in the South, *y’all*. The King James Version used *you* (singular) and *ye* (plural).

⁹ For example, Galatians 3:16 emphasizes a singular versus a plural. Acts 2:29 makes the point that David did not speak of himself in Psalm 16, since he was buried in a well-known tomb. Matthew 22:45 proves that Psalm 110 that *the son of David* is also his *Lord*, which invalidates a pharisaic argument against Christ. Small details can have major implications, because this is God’s word.

Sound Hermeneutics

Although sound hermeneutics is the foundation of accurate exegesis, some interpretive systems distort the literal meaning.

The most common method of destructive hermeneutics is allegorizing (spiritualizing). This makes the literal secondary to the supposedly superior allegorical meaning. An example of this disastrous method is the *Epistle of Barnabas*, a veritable loose canon of speculation. He merely uses Moses as a springboard.

Now, in that Moses said, “Ye shall not eat swine, nor an eagle, nor a hawk, nor a crow, nor any fish which has no scales on itself,” he included **three doctrines** in his understanding. Moreover he says to them in Deuteronomy, “And I will make a covenant of my ordinances with this people (emphasis mine).”¹⁰

What are those doctrines to which the *Epistle of Barnabas* refers? He introduces them with the phrase **he means**.

So then the ordinance of God is not abstinence from eating, but Moses spoke in the spirit. He mentioned swine for this reason: you shall not consort, **he means**, with men who are like swine [who forget the Lord when they have plenty to eat]. . . . “Neither shalt thou eat the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the kite, nor the crow.” Thou shalt not, **he means**, joint thyself to such men [who do not work, but steal from others (emphasis mine)]. . . .¹¹

His interpretive errors are rife. As a start, he:

1. denies that God literally forbade eating certain animals,
2. allegorizes “eating” into “associating with,”
3. allegorizes various animals into classes of people.

¹⁰ *The Epistle of Barnabas* 10:1–2, in *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1912), 2:375.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 10:3–5.

His approach lacks hermeneutical controls. Not only does he speculate about theology, but biology, “For this animal [the weasel] gives birth with its mouth.”¹² We must be more careful than the *Epistle of Barnabas* in interpretation.

Allegorizing is not the only type of interpretive problem. It is also easy to distort the historical meaning with a parallel-passage approach (saying, “Let’s go over to this passage”). When Dr. Merrill Unger taught the book of Zechariah, he would not allow us to use a typical Hebrew Bible. It seemed crazy to buy Zechariah bound separately. He said, “Read Zechariah with reference only to Zechariah. Cross-reference is fine, but not now. Read it only with reference to Zechariah.” This is insightful. Other methods try to read Ephesians into Exodus, intra-biblical eisegesis: reading Scripture into non-parallel Scriptures.

Teaching emphatically from the text and emphasizing doctrine eventually causes a congregation to ask, “How do you know that this is what it means? What is the proof? Is the whole world wrong and you alone are right? What says that this interpretation is correct? That is not the way my denomination interprets it! Are we not all free to interpret as we wish?” Interpreting as one wishes reduces God’s word to a subjective, confusing thing. The congregation must be able to say, “I can prove what it means.” The congregation’s growth in this area is an important aspect of the saints being equipped to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12). How one interprets Scripture is a crucial issue. Again, sound hermeneutics are essential to proper exegesis.

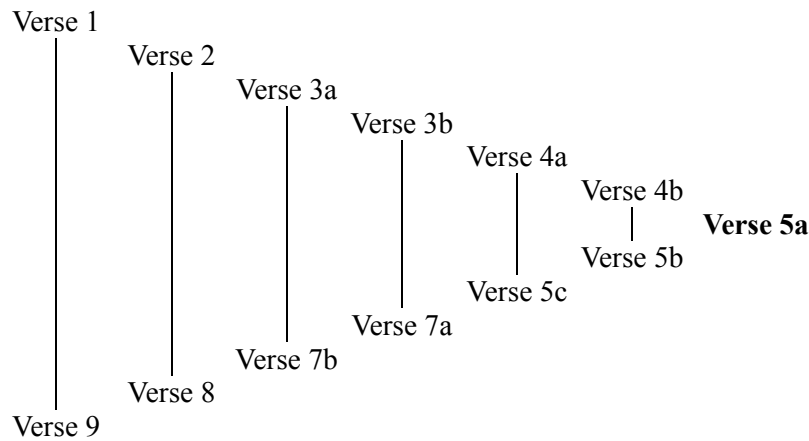
Recently, an unbelieving professor in Florida, made an interesting remark. He said, “I do not agree with what you believe, although it is what the Bible says.” He is honest in this regard. As far as the meaning goes, people who know Greek sometimes may not like or believe it, but still know that this is what it says.

¹² Ibid. 10:8.

Structure

The structure of Scripture is as inspired as the words of Scripture. Hebrew often expresses ideas in parallel lines. Though often missed, this structure balances thoughts and ideas against their counterparts. When the first line says something and the second (using different words) means the same thing, it is synonymous. If the second line states the opposite (positive/negative), it is antithetic. Parallel structure is a good teaching tool.

Why? These structures show that the Bible has design. The architecture of biblical passages is a strong argument against various liberal schools of thought that deny its inspiration and inerrancy (freedom from error). The various parallel-line structures can bolster his congregation's appreciation of biblical truth. Genesis 11 illustrates chiasm (sandwich parallelism). Verse 9 refers to something that verse 1 says. Verse 8 does the same for verse 2, and so forth. This structure repeats throughout the first nine verses. Is any doctrine inherent in this structure? God's awareness about what is happening (verse 5a) is the centerpiece. Liberals suggest that this structure is mere chance, as various editors cut and paste snippets from this story and that story together. Did this chiasm just happen? It is time for those liberals to become serious about the Bible and to stop playing games.



How could the structure of Genesis 11:1–9 reflect the unity of God’s word any better?¹³ Pastors need to use all of the tools of exegesis, so that their congregation's appreciation for Scripture will grow. We must not take it for granted. The evidences that the Bible is God’s supernatural book for man are everywhere.

Thus, patterns of parallelism also apply to larger contexts. Genesis 6:11–8:22 is a prime illustration.

- A. God resolves to destroy (6:11–13),
 - B. Noah builds an ark (6:14–22),
 - C. God commands men and women to enter (7:1–3),
 - D. The flood begins (7:10–12),
 - E. The flood prevails for 150 days (7:24),
 - E’. The flood recedes for 150 days (8:2–3).
 - D’. The earth dries (8:13–14),
 - C’. God commands men and women to exit (8:15–19).
 - B’. Noah builds an altar (8:20).
 - A’. God resolves not to destroy (8:21–22).

The centerpiece of this passage is that God remembers Noah. This emphasizes God’s grace in the midst of judgment. Does Scripture teach that truth elsewhere? In the midst of divine wrath one regularly finds expressions of grace. Our teaching should reflect God’s inspired structure. That is good teaching.

¹³ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988). This commentary on Genesis by Allen Ross emphasizes antithetic parallelism. The unity, which this reveals, shows that the once popular notions of the Documentary Hypothesis have failed. Likewise, it also is evidence against more modern schools of thought that also promote destructive criticism of the Bible.

Charlie Clough has worked extensively on the structure form of the Psalms (lament psalms, praise psalms, and so forth).¹⁴ One determines a psalm's *kind* by what predominates. Praise psalms emphasize praise. Lament psalms focus on complaint. Clough emphasizes, for example, that (national or individual) lament psalms usually have this order: (1) address to God, (2) lament, (3) a trust section, (4) petition, (5) praise. That structure appears repeatedly.

Although Psalm 6 is unquestionably a lament of David, its sequence is different. This psalm turns the normal order around. Notice the petition (verses 4–5): *Return, O Lord, rescue my soul*, precedes the lament in verse 6: *I am weary with my sighing*.

He placed the petition before the lament. How does one who is in trouble pray?¹⁵ When mired in deep trouble, one does not pray: “Thou great, almighty, omniscient God, we praise Thee for . . .” The emotion of the need pushes the lament (complaint) forward. This structure shows this Psalm's emotion. David is emotional; he feels it. Urgency brings it forward. Faithful exposition must communicate David's emotion, because that is central. If we do not reveal the tone and the structure, we really do not

¹⁴ Charles Clough, unpublished sermon notes, Lubbock Bible Church, Lubbock, TX, n.d. Published works on this topic also exist, but unfortunately, they tend to stray into abuses of this. Other than Clough's work, one can only make qualified bibliographic recommendations here. (This is similar to recommending Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1907]. *BDB* is an important work, but not for the theologically unstable or uninformed).

With regard to forms in the Psalms, it is possible to give a qualified recommendation to a basic introduction: Bernhard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths, the Psalms Speak for Us Today*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983). He tends to do well in classifying the various Psalms and identifying the different sections within each psalm for making outline divisions. He does not explain the grammatical basis for making those divisions. Furthermore, one cannot recommend Anderson's interpretations of those psalms.

¹⁵ The Psalmist thought that he was going to die.

preach the word; we are preaching our sermon. Sermons do not edify believers, but God’s word does.

Likewise the book of Acts has an undeniable structure. Seven times in Acts, a narrative of history precedes a summary of the period.¹⁶ Each cycle covers about five years. In the beautiful and forceful Acts 12:20–24, Luke calmly looks back at a period of turmoil. For each summary (verse 24 here), ask, “Why did he summarize it that way? What happened that brought him to this summary?” Acts 12:20–24 follows:

*Now he was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; and with one accord they came to him, and having won over Blastus the king's chamberlain, they were asking for peace, because their country was fed by the king's country. And on an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and (began) delivering an address to them. And the people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died. **But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied.***

The word of the Lord continued to grow! Verse 24 is the summary, but note verse 23! God removed Agrippa, but the word of God continued to progress. These progress reports of Acts look back at the events, indicating such things as, King Agrippa could not stop the gospel, because the word of God moves on.

When we miss the structure of God’s word, we fail to exegete. We are preaching sermons on the text, rather than preaching the text itself. This ought not to be the case.

¹⁶ Acts contains seven narrative sections, each of which ends with a progress report. The following lists the seven sections.

| | | | | | | | |
|----|----------|----|------------|----|------------|----|-------------|
| 1. | 1.1-2.47 | 3. | 6.8-9.31 | 5. | 12.25-16.5 | 7. | 19.21-28.31 |
| 2. | 3.1-6.7 | 4. | 9.32-12.24 | 6. | 16.6-19.20 | | |

Determination of Theme

Another tool of exegesis is determination of theme. Every preacher, even those of the first century under the inspiration of God such as Peter,¹⁷ has a theme. Preachers love to say certain things (their themes). It is such a delight to preach them. For example, in Acts 2:23–24, 36; 3:13–15; 4:10; and 5:3, what did Peter love to say? “You Israelites killed him! God raised him!” Repeatedly, that barb comes through. Peter loves antithesis! This is what you did to him. This is what God the Father did. “You killed him. God raised him!” “Kill Him,” was the verdict of man’s court. God’s court says, “Out!” and He came forth from the grave. Moreover, Peter loves to do that repeatedly.

Missing the theme *of* the text leads to imposing our own *onto* the text. Then we do not preach the Word, we preach our sermons. This does not edify.

Expression or Exposition

A good definition of Bible exposition is: The skill of translating careful exegesis into food for sheep. Scholarly work in exegesis is necessary, but we are not here to impress scholars. We have congregations that come for food. They come to grow and to develop. Expository skill is taking all the technical data and presenting it in a form that sheep can understand.

The pastor who knows how to feed sheep will have sheep. If he does not, he ought to look at one of two things. Maybe he is not a pastor, or maybe he needs to assume responsibility and say, “Perhaps, my thinking about exposition needs to change.”

Just because people come only sporadically on Sundays or do not return, should we suppose they are negative to doctrine?

¹⁷ This only refers to the apostles, prophets, or their close associates that God moved to write Scripture. No one can add books to our *God-breathed* Bible.

They may be, but do not start at that point. It is more responsible for a pastor to say, “Perhaps, I am not converting my exegesis into food for them. Perhaps, my message uses a spigot that is too high on the tower.” We cannot ignore this.

Summarizing, exegesis has to do with determining the truth of the text. Exposition follows completing all the homework with technical matters. Now, the pastor is ready to present the truth determined by exegesis.

Clarity Is Essential to Presentation

Clarity is the collection of everything determined by exegesis then reduced to the simplest sentence that communicates. The purpose of teaching is not to confuse or impress. The task is to communicate! Returning to the analogy of a tower with a spigot, spend as much time in the lower part of the tower (exposition), as in the higher part (exegesis). It can be difficult to present exegesis as clear and accurate exposition. Spend time on this step.

Should one preach grammatical terms? They can be meaningless, even for many people who know them. What is a Hebrew *casus pendens*?¹⁸ Must every sheep hear, “It is a *casus pendens*”? How edifying! Everyone needs to know that! Take the names of the cases, for example, genitive. What does genitive mean to most people? Is it not necessary to translate a genitive into something people understand? In addition, those good Latin terms, such as *accusative of general reference* are not part of the sheep’s vocabulary.¹⁹ While a good exegete ought to know these things, as an expositor, he must focus on making clear what he has exegetically determined from the text.

¹⁸ This is a word that is grammatically isolated from its natural function in a clause. It usually is the first word in its clause.

¹⁹ This is a rare usage of the accusative case that generally makes a broad qualification or limitation of a verbal idea.

A professor said, “After making a beautiful cabinet, what should the carpenter display? His tools or his workmanship?” Proper use of the language tools is more important than helping people understand those language tools. Similarly, why not use the tools to create a good meal, but serve them the meal (not the tools)? Who would enjoy a dinner consisting of a raw piece of steak, a stick of butter, a pan, some garlic and sliced mushrooms? Are those things essential? Absolutely, but despite our imagination, they are not a meal until the steak is barbequed and the mushrooms sautéed. Likewise, exposition must display the end result of careful exegesis in a way that the congregation can recognize as food. Otherwise, it cannot edify the flock.

Practical Illustrations

Study does not only occur behind a desk. Why not learn between the office and the lunchtime destination? Look out the window (after all, it is God’s creation!). It just may portray truth. Learn to think this way: “This really illustrates that doctrine.”

Consider, for example 1 Corinthians 15:3, starting with exegesis: Christ died for [ὑπὲρ, *huper*] our sins. . . . That passage requires carefully determining the meaning of the preposition *huper*. What is the case of its object? One might also want to look at *anti*, a somewhat related preposition. Christ died *huper* (“for”) our sins. The doctrine of the substitutionary death rides on the little preposition *huper*.²⁰

A pastor could read explanations of *huper* from the lexicons, from the grammars, and so forth to his congregation. Moreover, the use of this preposition in classical Greek, in Koine

²⁰ Exegetes often become technical on this issue because liberals have attacked this doctrine and the use of this preposition. An excellent technical presentation of evidence supporting a conservative view comes from Bruce K. Waltke, “The Theological Significations of Ἐνάντι and Ἐπί in the New Testament,” Th.D. dissertation (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1958). Understanding the arguments helps pastors protect their flocks.

Greek, in the New Testament, and in this epistle is vital and offers amazing insights into this verse. However, teaching this doctrine to children can show whether our message is exposition or raw exegesis. The question is not accuracy, for exegesis has already given us the meaning of the passage, rather the issue is whether we open a spigot that is low enough. Two scenarios show the difference.

In the first, we set children in front and present the gospel. In this case, we tell a group of nine year olds that Christ died on behalf of them. Paul used the word *huper*. Children just love Greek! Just imagine their excitement as they anticipate going to school and telling their friends, “Christ died *huper* our sins.”

In another scenario, imagine using a small cross for illustrating that Christ has taken the penalty of our sins upon Himself on the children's level. Place a paper ring with the word “SINS” on a boy's head. Humor can capture their attention, “We only put it on boys because it does not apply to girls. This ring on Kevin's head represents the fact that he is a sinner. Now, Kevin, Christ died for our sins. Where did Jesus place your sins?” He points to the cross. We take “SINS” from his head and put them on the cross. Is that useful doctrine? Sure it is, even though Kevin has no understanding of the exegetical usage of *huper*. The doctrine remains the same, but choosing the right spigot enables exposition that communicates.

Compassion

Effective exposition may contrast truth with compassion against truth that lacks it. For example, in Acts chapter 9, did God answer Ananias' wrong thinking with truth alone? Or, do verses 11–13 communicate truth with compassion?

So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. “And in a vision he has seen a

man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.” Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. “ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.”

Ananias rejection of divine viewpoint and wisdom clearly evidences carnality. In effect, he says: “*Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints in Jerusalem. . . and (by inference) do You think I will go to his house?*” That deserves rebuke, does it not? He rebelled against divine viewpoint by challenging divine wisdom.

God says none of those things, but instead gives Ananias a little more truth to correct his ignorance.

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. “ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:15–16).

“Go. . . .” repeats truth. “Let Me give you reasons. Let Me support why you ought to do this. I am not going to rebuke your lack of wisdom, or your resisting My viewpoint. He is a chosen vessel, a chosen instrument to Me. He shall bear My name before the Gentiles.” Ananias went.

God did not sternly give truth without compassion, saying “Ananias, you rebel, you are rejecting truth.” Neither did He express compassion without truth, saying, “Ananias, I understand and would be scared spitless, too. Thank you for listening. Thank you for letting Me share this with you, but I will choose someone else.” The message was both compassionate and truthful. It corrected him without destroying him.

God presented truth with compassion. Likewise, it is important that a pastor stand for truth, but have some feeling and some

compassion for his sheep. What does compassion have to do with communication? 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 says that it has everything to do with it. When we are not compassionate, it shows. People understand this well. We must not only determine what the passage teaches (exegesis), but we must communicate it compassionately and clearly. It is God's part to prepare the hearers to receive that meal and (by it) to grow.

Conclusion

Those who hear us may include spiritual giants and those who have no background in the Bible. Give the poor soul coming for the first time a break! The fact that he found the church door may indicate that he has already overcome tremendous barriers. After all, sleep is so wonderful on Sunday morning. Give this poor fellow credit for hoping, "Maybe they can teach me something." He is so ignorant that he thinks John 3:16 is room sixteen on the third floor. He is looking to you for some teaching that clarifies.

What happens if the pastor's philosophy of the Sunday morning message is: "The name of this game is exegesis." The newcomer says, "What is that?" Opening a spigot that is too high can still bless the spiritual giant. He is impressed because the pastor digs into the Word. However, that message does not do anything positive for the newcomer. A balance is necessary. Preaching should challenge the spiritual giants without neglecting those who are biblically illiterate.

Do not neglect exegesis. Do not lower the standards, but raise them by increasing your ability to exposit. Go deeper, but learn how to open the spigot a little bit lower. This is enormously helpful in the exposition of the Word of God. It may improve your ministry. It may even lead to saying, "Maybe he was not so negative to doctrine. Maybe he just did not understand what I was trying to say." It is our responsibility to find out exactly what the Bible means and to communicate that message clearly and accu-

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rately. We must both exegete and exposit. Unless we translate exegesis into exposition our message is as a sounding brass: We alone receive edification. Exposition translates exegesis into the language of the sheep and the lambs. Then and only then are the sheep fed.

—End—

The late Chester McCalley was the pastor of Beth Haven Church in Kansas City for 40 years. He was on the National Board of Advisors of Chafer Theological Seminary, a frequent Bible conference speaker, and author of many publications and tapes, which are still available. For further information, please contact wtruth@gvi.net, or call (800) 326-4414.