GENRE-SENSITIVE EXPOSITORY PREACHING OF THE LAMENT PSALMS: HONORING THE MESSAGE, MEDIUM, AND MOOD OF THE TEXT

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APPROVAL SHEET

GENRE-SENSITIVE EXPOSITORY PREACHING OF THE LAMENT PSALMS: HONORING THE MESSAGE, MEDIUM, AND MOOD OF THE TEXT

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To my loving wife, Sunghee,

and our three wonderful children,

Phillip, Philjin, and Minha

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
CTQ	*Concordia Theological Quarterly*
CTR	*Criswell Theological Review*
CuTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*
En	*Encounter*
ERT	*Evangelical Review of Theology*
Exp	*Expositor*
ExT	*The Expository Times*
FM	*Faith and Mission*
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HTS	*Hervormde Teologiese Studies*
Int	*Interpretation*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JEHS	*Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*

LuQ	*Lutheran Quarterly*
PR	*The Philosophical Review*
PC	*Philosophia Christi*
QJS	*Quarterly Journal of Speech*
QR	*Quarterly Review*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review & Expositor*
SBL	Studies Biblical Literature
SBJT	*The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SLJT	*St. Luke's Journal of Theology*
SVT	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
SVTQ	*St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*
SWJTS	*Southwestern Journal of Theology*
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

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PREFACE

There are many to whom I must express my sincerest appreciation for the help and support I have received during the work on this dissertation. I wish, first of all, to thank several people for their insights and encouragement at the various stages of the research and writing of this dissertation. Dr. Robert A. Vogel, my academic father and chairperson of my committee, has guided me with indescribable kindness and constant encouragement. It was in Dr. Vogel's seminars that I focused on the issues of preaching with genre-sensitivity. Without his help and guidance, this dissertation would never have been completed. I would also like to thank Drs. Duane A. Garrett and James D. Chancellor for serving on this supervisory committee. Both of these men also helped me with their careful reading of the manuscript and valuable insights into the subject during the academic process.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Expository preaching is the active practice of the declaration of 2 Timothy 3:16. "All scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." A fundamental aspect of expository preaching is the preacher's conviction that the Scripture is God's inspired Word and His everlasting and effective communication to humanity. Expository preachers also seek to exemplify 2 Timothy 2:15. "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." The preacher's 'correct handling' of God's inspired Word is crucial to expository preaching. Thus, a properly high view of Scripture demands expository simplicity and sophistication, surrender to and discreet treatment of the Word of God.[1]

Expository sophistication requires awareness of the Bible as literature with a wide range of literary genres. Because God used various genres effectively to communicate His Word, the expositor must appreciate each genre to facilitate better understanding and more effective preaching of God's Word.[2] A faithful expository

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[1]Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 22.

[2]Article XIII in the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics clarifies, "We AFFIRM that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study." See

preacher cannot be insensitive to the genre characteristics of a particular text, because "expository preaching never chooses between being either biblical or effective in communicating God's Word, but must be both."[3]

Statement of Problem

One-third of the Bible is poetic in genre. Among the poetic texts, the book of Psalms has been a deeply loved, incessantly preached, and intensely studied book among Christians, pastors, and scholars.[4] Despite an enduring preaching tradition, relatively less attention has been given to preaching the Psalms as a poetic genre than to preaching other biblical genres.[5] Some homileticians have even alleged that since the Psalms were originally intended to be sung, they should not be preached.[6] Other scholars also insist that the Psalms are unsuitable as sermon texts because they are full of prayers that consist mostly of human expressions—e.g., longings, complaints, and praises to God.[7] Even for

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also Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 52-53.

[3]Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 62.

[4]For a brief discussion of the historical trends and issues concerning Psalms study, see David M. Howard Jr., "Recent Trends in Psalms Study," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, ed. David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnord (Grand Rapids: Apollos, 1999), 329-68; James L. Mays, "Past and Present and Prospect in Psalm Study," in *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*, ed. Patrick D. Miller and Gene M. Tucker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 31-40; and Patrick D. Miller, "Current Issues in the Interpretation of the Psalms," in *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 3-17.

[5]Davis identifies the book of Psalms as the most under-preached text of the Bible. Ellen F. Davis, *Wondrous Depth: Preaching the Old Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), xv.

[6]Donald E. Gowan, *Reclaiming the Old Testament for the Christian Pulpit* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1980), 146; and David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 478.

[7]See the discussions in Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Preaching as Theology and Art* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 60; idem, "Preaching from the Psalms," *RevExp* 81 (Summer 1984): 437-50; and Thomas

those who have a homiletical conviction that the Psalms as God's inspired Word should be preached,[8] the Psalms are difficult texts to be preached because of the poetic dimension of the text. Because the Psalms are charged with non-cognitive qualities and distinguishing literary features, sermons based upon them should mirror these dimensions of the text. Perhaps, the most influential factor for avoiding the Psalms as sermon texts is related to how to do justice to the genre characteristics of the poetic texts and reflect the poetic nature and characteristics of the text into a sermon.

A claim of this dissertation is that a solution to the absence or avoidance of preaching the Psalms lies in what this dissertation calls "genre-sensitive preaching," which mirrors the genre nature and characteristics of the poetic text into a sermon. This dissertation also claims that for a proper and effective preaching of the Psalms, an expositor needs a genre sensitive preaching methodology that reflects the genre characteristics of the Psalms into the whole process for preparing a sermon.

Genre: Definition, Criteria, and Communicational Function

No good preaching exists apart from proper interpretation, and genre analysis is a key for proper biblical interpretation. To properly preach a particular text, the

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G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 43.

[8]The Psalms were used by the New Testament authors for their doctrinal or theological statements or arguments, quotations, and allusions. For example, Heb 1 quotes the Psalms five times. Jesus and Peter quoted several psalms for their actual preaching. In addition, the collection and canonical shape of the Psalms and church history validate the suitability of the Psalms as preaching texts. Concerning the suitability of the Psalms as preaching texts, See Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 89-117; Dale A. Brueggemann, "The Evangelists and the Psalms," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVasity, 2005); J. Clinton McCann Jr. and James C. Howell, *Preaching the Psalms* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 16; Bruce C. Birch, "Homiletical Resources: The Psalter as Preaching Text," *QR* 1, no. 5 (Winter 1981): 61-93; and Howard Neil Wallace, *Words to God, Words from God: The Psalms in the Prayer and Preaching of the Church* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 3-16.

preacher first needs to identify to what particular genre the text belongs, what distinguishing characteristics of the genre the text presents, and how these unique features function in interpretation. Genre consideration has been a vital part of Psalmic interpretation through the church fathers, medieval Christianity, and Reformation.[9] Since Hermann Gunkel's form-critical analysis of the Psalms, considering the definition, criteria, and function of genre have been normative for modern biblical studies and interpretation of the Psalms. However, defining genre is very daunting and definitions of genre vary according to which elements one sees as common to certain texts.

Genre definition. Genre is often regarded as a group of writings that share certain literary features in common with each other.[10] Thus, one easily groups similar writings without thinking too much about genre. In this sense, a basic starting point for defining genre is to view the literary nature of genre with the notion that genre is centrally about a group of typified formal/stylistic and thematic features of a text. In fact, this understanding of genre as a rule-governed institutional convention or codification of literature has been generally accepted.[11]

However, defining genre varies according to which nature of genre one emphasizes. In conjunction with the view of genre as literary convention or codification,

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[9]Harry P. Nasuti, *Defining the Sacred Song: Genre, Tradition and Post-Critical Interpretation of the Psalms* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 30-56.

[10]Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism,* 2nd ed. (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 75.

[11]In this sense, Longman uses various metaphors or models for understanding of genre such as "intuition," "contract," "game," "code," and "deep structure and patterns of expression," see Tremper Longman III, "Form Criticism, Recent Development in Genre Theory and the Evangelical," *WTJ* 47 (1985): 50-53.

scholars point out the historical (contextualized) nature of genre.[12] In this view, genres with their distinguishing literary features are typical responses to recurring social-rhetorical situations.[13] Although this nature does not rule out similarities of literary features across historical, cultural, and linguistic boundaries, according to this historical nature of genre, the determination of genres and genre categories basically requires the interpreter to scrutinize the historical and cultural situation of text. In short, genre is historically and culturally constructed with typified formal/thematic literary features as the result of the recurrence of situations.

In addition to the literary and historical natures of genre, recent discussions such as rhetorical criticism and speech act theory paid more attention to the functional nature of genre. This view basically emphasizes that a genre is a communicative practice.[14] While constituting "a language game" between the author and the reader, the author uses a set of typified formal/thematic literary features "with its own set of rules of making sense" [15] in order to accomplish specific communicational purpose. The recognition of this functional nature of genre keeps the interpreter attentive to the truth that different genres communicate in distinctive ways.[16] Simply put, to write according to

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[12]Hirsch emphasizes that a textual genre is a rule-governed social behavior. E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 92. Vanhoozer also explains that literary genres have a social and historical location. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 339.

[13]Carolyn R. Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *QJS*, no. 70 (1984): 159. Defining genre as "typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations," Miller focuses on a genre as social action.

[14]Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 213.

[15]Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Exegesis and Hermeneutics," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVasity, 2000), 52.

[16]Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 140.

a particular genre is to communicate specific intentions in a given situation through a literary text with certain meaning and impact.

Drawing upon the above-mentioned explanations of different definitional natures of genre—literary, historical, and functional (communicational) natures, the interpreters can conclude that the identification of genre of a text necessitates a holistic view of genre as a socio-rhetorically constructed group of typified formal/thematic literary features, which the author uses in distinctive ways to accomplish specific communicational purposes.

Genre criteria. Although genre is centrally about adherence to conventional textual features, similar features of the text do not necessarily establish rigid class. Thus, the arguments about the criteria for classifying specific genres have not been established with full consensus. However, sufficient family resemblances are recognizable within broad generic classes, making discrimination between genres possible and also providing provisional frameworks to understand individual texts—this is the heuristic use of genres.[17] In fact, genre involves three textual essentials—content, mood, and form (related to the language), and it is essentially associated with contextual features—function.[18] Accordingly, genre is mostly identified and classified according to

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[17]Hirsh asserts that genre concepts are best used as heuristic devices and thus recognizing genre types provides 'conceptual wedges' into texts. Hirsh, *Validity in Interpretation*, 116. See also Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 149-50.

[18]Herman Gunkel laid the foundation for modern genre analysis, and identified the same criteria—thought, mood, form (related to the use of language), motif, and life-setting. However, Gunkel operated under faulty presuppositions with undue emphasis on the connection between the life-setting and form of the text. For a summary review and critique of Gunkel's view of genre, see Tremper Longman III, "Form Criticism, Recent Development in Genre Theory and the Evangelical," *WTJ* 47 (1985): 46-67; Roy F. Melugin, "Formgeschichte-A Misleading Category? Some Critical Remarks," in *The Changing Face of*

commonalities and interrelations of these elements.

In terms of genre criteria, a form or structure is the most distinct element. Yet it cannot exist without content. In one sense, content is more fundamental than structure. Content even controls form and thus a formal analysis is often accompanied with content structure. Additionally, mood organizes the artistic and emotional structure of the text. Thus, an understanding of a genre and its characteristics of the text should encompass the three genre-essentials—the content, form, and mood of the text.

In this sense, 'genre' cannot be used interchangeably with 'form.' A genre cannot be defined exclusively, or even primarily, by characteristics of form itself. In fact, while 'form' is the visible shape or structure of an individual passage or unity, 'genre' is 'a matrix' for the text including the shape and structure of the text.[19] Thus, a synonymous use of genre and form can produce significant problems in classification of genre and also different approaches to the biblical text, sacrificing other significant genre-essentials.

On the basis of a conceptual differentiation between 'genre' and 'form,' the concept of 'form' as a term opposite to 'content' also presents significant problems in classification of genres. In fact, any analysis of 'form' including linguistic, syntactical, and structural aspects of the text cannot be undertaken without an understanding of the intellectual contents and emotional contents and moods of the respective texts. Since a formal analysis inevitably includes the intellectual contents and emotional moods of the

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Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 46-64; and Martin J. Buss, "Toward Form Criticism as an Explication of Human Life: Divine Speech as a Form of Self-Transcendence," in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 312-25.

[19]Antony F. Campbell, "Form Criticism's Future," in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 24.

text, the concept of ‘form’ as opposite to ‘content’ must be discarded.

Along with genre-based textual essentials (content, form, and mood), genre-based contextual essential (function) is an important criteria for genre. The identification of function necessarily entails the understanding of life-setting because they are mutually interlocked. At its simplest, life-setting (*Sitz im Leben*) describes the historical situation in which the text was written, while function explains the purpose of the text. Based upon the holistic view of genre, genre as “a language game” is inextricably interwoven with a particular communicational purpose for choosing it in the specific yet recurring situations of life. Consequently, the meaning of the text is contingent upon the language-game, and the language-game is dependent upon a particular purpose of the text in the particular yet recurring contexts-in-life. For instance, once the interpreter shifts the context and function in which the text is to be seen, he shifts the way he sees the features that text has in common and thus he understands the meaning of the text differently. Thus, the function (related to the context) is an important element for genre identification and classification and also for the proper interpretation of the text.

In short, genre as rule-governed contextualized convention correlates content, form, and mood with each other to a certain extent, producing similar literary phenomena for accomplishing particular purpose. Thus, a proper understanding of a psalm as poetic genre also requires a holistic approach with the analysis and appreciation of these genre-based contextual and textual essentials—function, content, form, and mood and their interrelationships in the text.

Genre as communicative action. Genre not only correlates the context, function, content, form, and mood of the text, but also involves the entirety of written (or

oral) communication between the author and the reader. As Vanhoozer aptly explains, "what writing pulls asunder—author, context, text, reader—genre joins together."[20]

Genre first functions as a valuable communicational link between the author and the text in communication. More importantly, the communicational function of genre in biblical interpretation must be scrutinized from the author's perspective, because a particular context and purpose of the author determines the choice of genre. Obviously, there is significant tension between the constraints of a genre as conventional ways of communication and an author's ability to individualize the text.[21] Nonetheless, authorial intention remains the presiding principle in selecting and shaping of the genre into a specific text to enact a specific communication intended to have a specific impact/effect on specific readers.[22] Thus, the starting point for understanding genre as communicative action and thus a proper interpretation of the text should be the author; the genre controls the meaning and the shape of the text as purposed and intended by the author.

Every interpreter comes to a text with certain expectations based upon his genre understanding.[23] In other words, genre directs the response of the reader to the text and also his proper understanding of the text. Genres work to establish "an author-reader

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[20]Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?*, 339.

[21]Jeannine K. Brown, "Genre Criticism and the Bible," in *Words & the Word*, ed. David G. Firth and Jamie A. Grant (Downers Grove, IL: InterVasity, 2008), 130-135.

[22]Abraham Kuruvilla, *Text to Praxis*, Library of New Testament Studies, ed. Mark Goodacre, vol. 393 (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 38.

[23]The interpreter/reader should be recognized as an active participant in the communicational triad—author, text/genre, and reader. However, this writer views readers as subservient to texts and authors rather than as creators of textual meaning.

covenant" in order to make certain expectations operative in the communication.[24] Such expectations involve not only a specific meaning but also a specific manner of textual interpretation.

Therefore, a proper understanding of a genre and its characteristics of the text should encompass the analysis and appreciation of the genre-based textual essentials (the content, form, and mood of the text) and the genre-based contextual feature (function) and their interrelationships. Furthermore, an understanding of a communication act in the biblical text necessarily includes an account of genre, the work of the text intended by the author, and the genre-guided reception of the text by the reader.

As we have examined, a proper understanding of the biblical text as God's written communication requires the interpreter to have a holistic view of the definitional natures, criteria, and communicational functions of genre and to keep this holistic genre-sensitivity throughout the entire processes or stages of interpretation and sermon preparation. Although the presence of certain literary features is helpful for the identification of a genre and even certain literary features of the text can be utilized in the sermon, such homiletical suggestions remain limited and fragmented unless the preacher recognizes the holistic interrelations of the genre-based textual essentials (content, form, and mood) as a complex 'matrix' for a certain communicational purpose and impact/effect—genre-based contextual component.

In fact, as every communicational act is genre-bound, biblical preaching is

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[24]Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 76; and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "From Speech Acts to Scripture Acts: The Covenant of Discourse and the Discourse of the Covenant," in *After Pentecost: Language and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene, and Karl Möller (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 18.

essentially genre-bound and thus it requires of the preacher's genre-sensitivity. Biblical preaching, however, inevitably entails the change of genres, because the preacher must transpose a written biblical genre into an oral contemporary sermonic genre. In this sense, genre-sensitive preaching in this dissertation is not merely to understand the genre-characteristics of the text as literary or linguistic devices and to replicate or reflect those characteristics into the sermonic elements equivalently. Rather, it is to reanimate or regenerate the communicational purpose, impact, and dynamics of the text in the sermon without losing the holistic and inter-relational nature of the genre-essentials (function, content, form, and mood). Consequently, throughout the entire sermon-making process, a genre-sensitive preacher must be attentive to the biblical author's holistic communicational strategies, which depend upon the interrelations of the function, content, form, and mood of the text in order to grasp and deliver the author's intended purpose, meaning, and impact/effect for the contemporary audience.

Unfortunately, the recognition of genre-essentials in the Psalms creates homiletical difficulties and problems when the preacher lacks a proper hermeneutical and homiletical tool to reflect the genre-essentials in a sermon.

Genre-Sensitivity: The Crux of the Problem for Preaching the Psalms

Difficulties in preaching the Psalms. The issue of genre-sensitivity entails difficulties in interpretation and thus leads to the neglect of preaching the Psalms.[25] One of the difficulties for preaching the Psalms lies in the lack of historical context behind

[25]See the discussion in Mark D. Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 183; Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms*, 43-44; and Achtemeier, "Preaching from the Psalms," 437-38.

many individual psalms.[26] Along with the lack of external context, the internal historical and literary contexts of the Psalms are often either ambiguous or excessively extensive, so that the preacher cannot fully grasp the historical background of the text.[27]

In addition, preachers also find it difficult to preach the Psalms because of their unexpectedly blunt and honest content. Preachers face the difficulty of determining whether every psalm, even the most vitriolic of imprecatory psalms, must be considered as an appropriate preaching text. This partially explains why some psalms are rejected as preaching texts and even excluded from lectionary readings and hymn books.[28]

Furthermore, many scholars assert that the greatest roadblock to the proper interpretation and preaching of the Psalms is the presence of unique literary features such as the high degree of structure and the frequent use of figurative language.[29] An expositor's careful analysis of the structural and stylistic features of each psalm in exegesis necessarily entails a daunting task as to how to reflect this nature of the poetic text into the nature of the sermon.

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[26]Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 118-23. Despite the objections raised in the scholarly literature, there is no compelling reason to deny the historicity of the Psalms' superscriptions. Brevard S. Childs, "Reflections on the Modern Study of the Psalms," in *Magnolia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God*, ed. Frank Moore Cross et al. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 383-84.

[27]Andrew J. Schmutzer, "Preaching from the Poetic Books," in *The Moody Handbook of Preaching*, ed. John Koessler (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 157; and Achtemeier, *Preaching from the Old Testament*, 141-42. Concerning the reasons for the difficulty in preaching the psalms, Schmultzer ranks the scanty historical context first, yet Achtemeier focuses on the cultural distance.

[28]Robert Davidson, "In Honesty of Preaching: the Old Testament Dilemma and Challenge," *ExT* 111, no. 11 (August 2000): 365-68.

[29]Harold T. Bryson, *Expository Preaching: The Art of Preaching through a Book of the Bible* (Nashville: B&H, 1995), 217. Walter C. Kaiser Jr. *Toward An Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), 212; Schmutzer, "Preaching from the Poetic Books, 158; Ellen F. Davis, "Maximal Speech: Preaching the Psalms," in *Wondrous Depth: Preaching the Old Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 17-32; and Wallace, *Words to God, Word from God*, 135-55.

Additionally, in a dynamic and heart-impacting book like the Psalms, cognitive contents cannot be isolated from emotional expressions.[30] However, ascription of unwarranted tension between the cognitive aspects of the faith based upon God's revelation and the non-cognitive aspects of human emotions and experiences in the Psalms often makes preachers reluctant to exposit the Psalms.

The aforementioned difficulties for preaching the Psalms converge on the very nature and characteristics of a genre. Accordingly, proper and effective preaching of the Psalms requires the preacher to consider the genre-essentials in his sermon-making process—that is, the preacher needs a genre-sensitive hermeneutical and homiletical methodology. However, the neglect of genre essentials and their interrelationship in hermeneutical process and the absence of a proper genre-sensitive homiletical method have created and are still producing significant problems in preaching the Psalms.

Deficiency in genre-sensitivity. Unlike other passages of scripture, each psalm is its own coherent unit for a sermon. Sadly, many famous preachers, regardless of their theological, historical, and social backgrounds, have preached an excerpt from a psalm (one or two verses) without consideration of the nature of genre and its genre characteristics.[31] Similarly, contemporary preachers often accentuate the cognitive content from a portion of a psalm to build a message or develop a theological assertion,

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[30]Velema W. H. and Susan van der Ree, "Preaching on the Psalms," *ERT* 21, no. 3 (July 1997): 258.

[31]According to my survey, eminent theologians and preachers, including St. Augustine, John Chrysostom, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, Charles Simeon, G. Campbell Morgan, Alexander Maclaren, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Karl Barth have mostly preached on a portion of a psalm rather than on an entire psalm.

neglecting the genre-essentials necessary for effective preaching of the Psalms.[32] In this sense, despite the great legacy of psalm preaching, the traditional homiletical method, devoid of genre-sensitivity, should not serve as the model for today's preachers.

A more profound problem lurks in the preaching of the Psalms without genre-sensitivity. Throughout church history, the focus of preaching has often betrayed a false dichotomy between ideas and experiences (or propositional and experiential knowledge).[33] The tension between rationalism and emotionalism has been and still is a recurring problem in the homiletical sphere.[34] Stephen Nichols compares this problem to a pendulum: "The tendency to move from one [rationalism] to another [emotionalism] typifies individual Christians, entire churches, and sometimes entire generations of the church."[35]

Too often, expository preachers have reduced the symphony of Scripture to one note, treating every text for its doctrinal or intellectual content. To some extent, the neglect of other genre-essentials is due to the lack of knowledge about genre itself.

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[32]Among famous expository preachers, Martin Lloyd-Jones, John Stott, John MacArthur, and John Piper mostly choose a portion of a psalm for their preaching texts.

[33]Edwards explains the shifts in the focus of preaching in the seventeenth, the eighteenth, and the nineteenth centuries based upon the mutual reactions between reason and feeling. O. C. Edwards Jr., *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 391-551. Mitchell also notes that for centuries Western culture has preached primarily to mental faculties, emphasizing appeal to reason. Henry H. Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008), 12.

[34]In recent times, traditional preaching has been criticized for its rationalistic approach and the distillation of proposition-dull preaching. There has been the New Homiletics' undue emphasis upon the experience in the preaching event. Concerning the New Homiletics' critique of traditional preaching, see Richard L. Eslinger, *A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletical Method* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 13-14; and Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1980), 4-14.

[35]Stephen J. Nichols, *Jonathan Edwards: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), 108.

However, to some extent, the neglect of genre-essentials stems from fear that genre-sensitivity might compromise the authority of Scripture and textual meaning. For expository preachers, as Vanhoozer aptly describes, "real appreciation of Scripture's literary pluralism has been somewhat overshadowed by the paradigm of God as author."[36] That paradigm should be preserved, yet it must be construed correctly so as not to negate the genre characteristics and conventions which God has employed to communicate effectively.

A text-faithful expositor should also remember that minimizing the non-cognitive dimension of the text is unfaithful to God's Word and thus stunts the growth of Christian faith as much as minimizing the intellectual dimension does.[37] The text-honoring expositor should faithfully preach the book of Psalms as it stands without flattening the text into mere propositions by de-affecting the text. In this sense, expository preachers should move beyond a proposition-driven approach to a more text-driven approach that respects the genre nature and its characteristics in the text, holding fast to their conviction of the Bible as God's everlasting and effective communication to humanity.

Defective genre-sensitive methodology. With the development of hermeneutical studies on the literary characteristics of the poetic text, several scholars have proposed preaching methods and procedures with the aim of reflecting the

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[36]Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "The Semantics of Biblical Literature," in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbrigde (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 79.

[37]J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hand-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 347.

distinctive features of the poetic text in a sermon. However, their homiletical guidelines are not only scanty but also defective in terms of genre-essentials. Without explaining the concept, components, and communicational roles of genre, they often end with vague suggestions or fragmentary suggestions, focusing exclusively on the literary structure and style of a psalm.[38]

Among the scanty suggestions, W. H. Bellinger, Elizabeth Achtemeier, and Thomas G. Long have published noticeable studies describing a procedure for preparing sermons from the Psalms with special consideration to the poetic features.[39] Bellinger's preaching procedure directs the preacher to consider the psalm's form, parallelism, and imagery.[40] However, he does not provide suitable suggestions based upon the nature of genre and the correlations among genre-essentials and his imprudent employment of the homiletics of story as a key methodological tool results in an abandonment of the poetic form. Achtemeier's preaching procedure also takes notes of the literary features of the Psalms, yet her suggestions give no direction for analyzing and utilizing poetic features other than repetition and parallelism of the text.[41] Furthermore, her procedure does not

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[38]Dwight E. Stevenson, *Preaching on the Books of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1961), 97; Lamar E. Cooper, "Interpreting the Poetical Books for Preaching," *Faith and Mission* 13, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 85-97; W. H. Velema and Susan Van der Ree, "Preaching on the Psalms," *ERT* 21, no. 3 (July 1997): 258-67; Thomas Goodman, "Preaching from the Psalms," *Preaching* 10, no. 1 (July-August 1994): 32-36; Colin J. Sedgwick, "Preaching from the Psalms," *ExT* 103, no. 12 (Summer 1992): 361-64; Greg W. Parsons, "Guidelines for Understanding and Proclaiming the Psalms," *BSac* 147, no. 586 (April-June 1990): 169-87; J. Clinton McCann Jr. and James C. Howell, *Preaching the Psalms* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001); and Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 183-209.

[39]Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Preaching from the Old Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989), 137-64; William H. Bellinger, "Let the Words of My Mouth: Proclaiming the Psalms," *SWJTS* 27, no. 1 (Fall 1984): 17-24; idem, *Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praise* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990); and Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*, 43-53.

[40]Bellinger, "Let the Words of My Mouth," 18-20.

[41]Achtemeier, *Preaching from the Old Testament*, 137-63.

deal with how to convey the emotional aspect of the psalm through the poetic features in the homiletical process. Thomas Long provides five useful guiding questions to analyze the literary and rhetorical concerns of the text.[42] Long's homiletical method values the rhetorical effect of the literary features, and insists that the rhetorical effect of the text should be used in the sermon to produce a similar effect for the modern audience. However, he fails to employ the literary features used in a psalm to create a similar effect for hearers, and his procedure does not demonstrate how to reproduce the rhetorical efforts or impacts. More significantly, since Long abandons classical exegesis (author-centered hermeneutic),[43] his homiletics tends to sacrifice the author-intended content, focusing on re-creating the effects for the audience. Accordingly, although these homileticians have recognized the importance of reflecting the literary characteristics, their methodologies for preaching the Psalms remain limited and fragmented.

The defect of genre-sensitive methodologies in preaching the Psalms can also be easily discovered by studying famous expository homileticians. Proposing the same procedure for exegeting the poetic text as he does for exegeting prose texts, Walter Kaiser provides few genre-sensitive homiletical suggestions.[44] Sidney Greidanus provides helpful guidelines for preaching different biblical genres, following his holistic

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[42]Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms*, 43-52. His five questions are as follows: (1) what is the genre of the text? (2) what is the rhetorical function of this genre? (3) what literary devices does this genre employ to achieve its rhetorical effect? (4) what does the text say and does in its setting? and (5) how can preacher shape the sermon to achieve what some aspect of the text wished to achieve?

[43]His abandonment of classical exegesis is evident in his article. See Thomas G. Long. "The Use of Scripture in Contemporary Preaching," *Int* 44, no. 4 (October 1990): 341.

[44]In this book, Kaiser asserts that the emotional flavor of the poetic texts, which usually cannot be contained in prose forms, offsets the exegetical burden for the preacher. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 211-31.

interpretive method of the text—literary, historical, and theological interpretation.[45] Despite the fact that he identified the Psalms as a seventh major biblical genre, however, he consciously or unconsciously omits providing guidelines for interpreting and preaching the poetic genre. Haddon Robinson's exegetical method provides a set of questions that identify the distinctive features of a psalm—the meaning, feeling, and form or structure of a Psalm.[46] Yet, according to his method, once the meaning of the text is developed into a big idea, the preacher does not need to heed the exegetical products from the poetic text in his homiletical process.[47] Scott Duvall and Daniel Hays identify three essential steps in exegeting a psalm that correspond to its meaning, its structure, and its emotional effects. However, these exegetical products are jettisoned in the homiletical process after translating the meaning of the text into timeless truth in propositional form.[48] Recently, Jeffrey Arthurs provided useful suggestions for respecting the form, concrete language, and intense emotion of the poetic text in the homiletical process. Yet his method neither discusses the nature of genre nor considers interrelations among genre-essentials at the communicational level that provide the exegetical and hermeneutical foundations for the legitimate and effective use of rhetorical devices and effects in the homiletical process.[49] Consequently, an integrated method and procedure

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[45]Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 23.

[46]Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 69.

[47]Robinson does, however, assert that the mood of the text should be recreated in the mood of the sermon. Haddon W. Robinson, "Homiletics and Hermeneutics," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 814.

[48] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 360-64.

[49]Jeffrey D. Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety: How to Re-Create the Dynamics of Biblical*

for honoring the nature of genre and genre-essentials of the poetic text is still needed for an expository preacher.

Toward the Recovery of Lament Psalms in Biblical Preaching

Approximately one-third of the psalms are lament.[50] Although many psalms defy clear categorization as a psalm of lament, the laments are often considered to be the largest subgenre of psalms. Included in the broad category of 'lament' are the subcategories of individual lament, communal lament, penitential, and imprecatory psalms.[51]

The lament psalms, recognized as "the best represented literary type in the Psalter,"[52] have received a great deal of attention from biblical scholars.[53] Despite a

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Genres (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 38-61.

[50]Most Old Testament scholars use lament psalms and complaint psalms synonymously. Using the term "complaint psalms," Gerstenberger identifies complaints as expressing "the plight of the supplicant, sometimes in drastic words and metaphors, to remind Yahweh of his responsibilities." Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1 with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, ed. Rolf Knierim and Gene M. Tucker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 13. However, using both terms synonymously, Anderson states, "The lament is an appeal to God's compassion to intervene and change a desperate situation. . . . Often the complaint is accompanied by a protestation of innocence or a plea for forgiveness." Bernard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1983), 76. In addition to these terms, Brueggemann calls the laments psalms of disorientation. Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1984), 11. I would prefer the designation 'complaint' or 'protest' psalms rather than 'lament' psalms, because it more accurately describes their contents. Nonetheless, 'lament' is the more common and easily recognized term, and will be used herein.

[51]The lists of lament psalms often includes traditional group of the penitential psalms (Pss 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143) and imprecatory verses against personal, societal, or national enemies (Pss 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 28, 31, 35, 37, 40, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 63, 64, 68, 69, 70, 71, 74, 79, 83, 94, 104, 109, 129, 137, 139, 140, 141, and 143). For the lists of lament psalms classified by scholars, see Table A1 in Appendix 1.

[52]J. W. Wevers, "A Study in the Form Criticism of Individual Complaint Psalms," *VT*, no. 6 (1956): 80.

[53]The scholarly research on the lament psalms has been mainly done by form-critical German scholars such as Hermann Gunkel, Hans Schmidt, Clause Westermann, Erhard S. Gerstenberger, and

recent explosion of study of the lament psalms led by the Old Testament scholars, the psalms of lament are generally neglected in contemporary theological discussion.[54] Alongside their theological neglect, the Psalms of lament are noticeably neglected and excluded in Christian worship.[55] Compounding this eclipse of the lament psalms in Christian theology and praxis is the fact that many preachers bypass them in preaching. The lament psalms, being some of the hardest texts of the Bible, are seldom preached from the pulpit.[56] In fact, preaching the lament psalms, which are basically prayers

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Rainer Albertz. For a brief survey of their contributions to the understanding of the lament psalms, see Walter Brueggemann, "The Friday Voice of Faith," *CTJ* 36 (2001): 12-15.For the study of lament psalms among American biblical scholars, see two collections of Bruggemann's works: *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984); *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Patrick D. Miller, *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); Samuel E. Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Denis Dombkowski Hopkins, *Journey through the Psalms: A Path to Wholeness* (New York: United Church Press, 1990); and Ingvar Fløynsvik, *When God Becomes My Enemy: The Theology of the Complaint Psalms* (St. Louis: Concordia Academic, 1997).

[54]Webster and Beach identify that cultural influences, relational styles, theological perspectives, and misunderstanding discourage the use of the lament psalms in the contemporary church. Brian L. Webster and David R. Beach, "The Place of Lament in the Christian Life," *BSac* 164 (October-December 2007): 387-402. In the similar way, Billman and Migliore identify seven questions underlying resistance to the lament prayer—culture of complaint, the viewpoint of the marginalized, the cult of individualism and subjectivity, a serious hazard for the people in despair, a lack of strong faith and trust in God, presuppositions of an attitude of self-righteousness, and contradiction of Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Kathleen D. Billman and Daniel L. Migliore, *Rachel's Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1999), 16-19. However, Brueggemann identifies three practical reasons for the lack of lament psalms in theological discussion: (1) an Enlightenment consciousness against the deep irrationality of human speech, (2) a romantic view of human reality that fits with theological scholasticism, and (3) Christian pietistic tradition against vigorous protest. Brueggemann, "The Friday Voice of Faith,"15-18.

[55]See Patrick D. Miller, "Prayer and Worship," *CTJ* 36 (2001): 53; and Paul A. Baglyos, "Lament in the Liturgy of the Rural Church: An Appeal for Recovery," *CuTM* 36, no. 4 (August 2009): 253; Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 265-67; William L. Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousands Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witness* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 293; Lester Meyer, "A Lack of Laments in the Church's Use of the Psalter," *LuQ* 7, no. 1 (1993): 67-78; and Brueggemann, "The Friday Voice of Faith,"14.

[56]Perry H. Biddle, "Preaching the Lectionary," in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, ed. Peter E. Fink (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 980; and Sally A. Brown, "When Lament Shapes the Sermon," in *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square*, ed. Sally A. Brown and Patrick D. Miller (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 35.

(human responses) to God, entails hermeneutical and homiletical difficulties. Such difficulties include ambiguous or absent external and internal contexts,[57] unexpected and vitriolic imprecatory contents,[58] stereotypical forms with textual components,[59] and strong emotional expressions with sudden mood swing.[60] In fact, these hermeneutical and homiletical obstacles are reflective of hermeneutical and homiletical issues in preaching all of Psalms with genre-sensitivity.

Recently, several scholars have given voice to the recovery of the lament psalms in the pulpit.[61] However, little attention has been given to a genre-sensitive methodology for preaching the lament psalms. More than once I discovered a book or article promising help on how to preach the lament psalms, only to find that it actually dealt with how to interpret or understand them. Thus, in order to recover the legitimate

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[57]Patrick D. Miller, "Trouble and Woe: Interpreting Biblical Laments," *Int* 37 (January 1983): 33-34.

[58]Gerstenberger writes that despite the clear canonical status of imprecatory Psalms, they "are all but missing in homiletical series of pericopes, perhaps for liturgical, perhaps also for ethical reasons." Erhard S. Gerstenberger, "Enemies and Evildoers in the Psalms: A Challenge to Christian Preaching," *HBT* 4-5, nos. 2-1 (December-June 1982-1983): 62; see also Parsons, "Guidelines for Understanding," 177-78.

[59]Miller, "Trouble and Woe," 33-40. Concerning the distinctive structural patterns of lament psalms, Westermann identifies five components: address, lament, turning toward God, petition, vow of praise. Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 170. However, Gerstenberger meticulously categorizes the pattern as follows: invocation, complaint, confession of sin or assertion of innocence, affirmation of confidence, plea or petition for help, imprecation against enemies, acknowledgement of divine response, vow or pledge, hymnic element, blessings, and anticipated thanksgiving. Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 12.

[60]Parsons identifies imprecations and emotional swings as the two distinctive challenges for preaching the lament psalms. Parsons, "Guidelines for Understanding," 177-78. Concerning the historical debates over the reasons for the sudden shift of mood, see LeAnn Snow Flesher, "Rapid Change of Mood: Oracles of Salvation, Certainty of A Hearing, or Rhetorical Play?," in *My Words Are Lovely: Studies in the Rhetoric of the Psalms*, ed. Robert L. Foster and David M. Howard Jr. (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 33-45.

[61]On reclaiming the lament psalms for preaching, see J. Clinton McCann Jr., "Thus Says the Lord: 'Thou Shalt Preach on the Psalms'," in *The Psalms and Practice: Worship, Virtue, and Authority*, ed. Stephen Breck Reid (Collegeville, MN: the Liturgical Press, 2001), 111-22; and J. Clinton McCann Jr. and James C. Howell, "The Problem of Pain," in *Preaching the Psalms* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 104-16.

status of lament psalms in Christian theology and praxis, we need a preaching methodology that reflects the nature of genre and its characteristics of the lament psalms and deals with their hermeneutical and homiletical difficulties. Therefore, this study investigates more deeply the application of the genre characteristics to the preaching task and proposes a genre-sensitive preaching methodology that respects the function (purpose), message (content), medium (structural/stylistic literary features), and mood (emotional impact) of the lament psalms for preaching.

Thesis/the Purpose of the Study

Generally speaking, this dissertation aims to provide a remedy or corrective measure for current defective methods for the preaching of the psalms. The corrective is to provide hermeneutical and homiletical guidelines for more genre-sensitive expository preaching of the Psalms, respecting genre-based textual components—the message (intellectual content), medium (structural/stylistic literary features), and mood (emotional impact) of a psalm, genre-based contextual component (function), and their interactions throughout the exegetical, theological, and homiletical processes of sermon preparation. Particularly, this study, however, is limited to the interest in the genre of the lament psalms. In suggesting and discussing the necessity of a holistic method for reflecting those genre-components (the function, message, medium, and mood) of the lament psalms into sermons throughout sermon-making processes, Psalm 31 is examined in-depth to ascertain the validity of the holistic methodology proposed. A method that incorporates the genre characteristics of a psalm throughout the whole processes of sermon preparation can provide an important aid to bridge between sound understanding and effective expository preaching of the Psalms/lament psalms.

Background

Expository preaching with different biblical genres has been my continuous interest since I began to study homiletics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. My initial interest began with a question: "if expository preaching is text-driven preaching, then how should expositors deal with genre-essentials, including literary features and the emotional effects that emerge from the text?"

My study concerning genre-sensitive preaching originated from three seminal books—Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (1981), Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (1988), and Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (1991). Greidanus' exclusion of the Psalms from other biblical genres motivated me to focus on the Psalms. In addition, Steven Mathewson's *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative* (2002) and Jeffrey Arthurs' *Preaching with Variety* (2007) helped me recognize the necessity of genre-sensitive expository methodology.

I was also motivated by several books concerning interpreting and preaching from the Psalms—James L. Kugel's *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (1981), Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Poetry (1985)*, Tremper Longman III's *How to Read the Psalms* (1988) and *Literary Approach to Biblical Interpretation* (1989), Leland Ryken's *How to Read the Bible as Literature* (1985), Thomas Long's *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (1989), Elizabeth Acthemeier's *Preaching from the Old Testament* (1989), and J. Clinton McCann, Jr. and James C. Howell's *Preaching the Psalms* (2001). Particularly, Walter Brueggemann's two collections, *The Message of the Psalms* (1984) and *The Psalms and the Life of Faith* (1995) induced me to study the issue of preaching the lament psalms.

Additionally, my Th.M. Professors David Allen, Steven Smith, and Calvin Pearson challenged me to broaden my view of expository preaching to incorporate genre-sensitivity. While studying in the Ph.D. program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Professors Robert A. Vogel and Hershael W. York guided me with the biblical, historical, hermeneutical, doctrinal, and homiletical foundations for genre-sensitive expository preaching of the Psalms. Especially, Dr. Vogel's seminars on "American Preaching" and "Hermeneutics for Preaching" encouraged me to focus on the issues concerning expository preaching of the Psalms and to formulate biblical and hermeneutical foundations for genre-sensitive preaching of the Psalms. Dr. York's seminars on "Expository Preaching" and "Doctrinal Preaching" directed me to build a genre-sensitive methodology for preaching the Psalms. Through my doctoral preaching seminars and colloquia under the supervision of Drs. Vogel and York, I came to recognize the need for a holistic method for preaching the Psalms with genre-sensitivity. Their teaching enabled me to recognize valid principles for genre-sensitive expository preaching of the Psalms.

The Necessity and Importance of the Study

No method of expository preaching can fully capture the whole dynamic of the interaction between the triune God, the Bible, the preacher, and the congregation. However, three essential characteristics of expository preaching respectively formulate its theological, hermeneutical, and homiletical foundations: a high view of Scripture, an author-centered hermeneutic, and transformational communication. In this dissertation, the method for respecting the message, medium, and mood of a psalm in genre-sensitive sermon preparation is based upon the essential components for genre identification and is

derived from the above three characteristics of expository preaching.

The Total Spectrum of the Text

Scholars have historically differed in their conception and definition of genre, with no apparent unifying criteria.[62] Despite the variability between conceptions of genre, however, general agreement exists between categories that emphasize content, fixed forms, and mood.[63] Many biblical scholars stress the inseparability and interdependence of the outer forms of structure and inner aspects, content and tone of the poetic genre.[64] Thus, the message, medium, and mood of the text are not mutually exclusive but intermingled and inseparable; hence the expositor must be mindful of the single matrix of these three elements in order to understand a psalm properly.

Additionally, since the genre-bound character of understanding necessitates the interpreter's recognition of the interdependence of the whole and parts of the text,[65] the investigation of each generic feature is an essential step for understanding a psalm. In fact, the unique theological width and depth conveyed by the message of the psalms, a high degree of literary features employed by the medium of the psalms, and the emotional intention and effect loaded in the mood of the psalms individually contribute to

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[62]Grant R. Osborne, "Genre Criticism," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 168. Osborne clarifies that genre is not only a means of classifying literary types, but also functions at an epistemological and ontological level.

[63]Tremper Longman III, *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 246; and Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1956), 221.

[64]Osborne, "Genre Criticism," 164; Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 29; Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVasity, 1988), 20; and idem, *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, 246.

[65]Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 76-77.

the uniqueness of the Psalms, further emphasizing the necessity of studying these individual poetic elements.

Expository preaching founded on a high view of Scripture is text-honoring, text-driven, and textually-guided. A faithful expositor, thus, should honor the total spectrum of the God-given text. Accordingly, a holistic method for respecting the message, medium, and mood of a psalm is an essential and important tool for expository preachers who explore the inexhaustible richness of Scripture.

An Author-Centered and More Genre-Sensitive Hermeneutic

Discovering the meaning of a written communication requires attention to three foci: the author, the text, and the reader. In biblical hermeneutics, however, the role of each in producing communicative meaning has been debated; focus has shifted from the author, to the text, and then to the reader.[66] The traditional interpretation of the Psalms focused on their titles and theological contents, following the historical-grammatical method to discover the biblical author's intended meaning—an author-centered hermeneutic.[67] However, beginning in the early twentieth century, hermeneutical discussion on the Psalms became text-centered and then, more recently, reader-oriented.[68]

Genre plays an important role in the hermeneutical process, considering all

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[66]Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 366-96.

[67]William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 248.

[68]Donald K. Berry, *The Psalms and Their Readers: Interpretive Strategies for Psalm 18*, JSOTSup, ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davis, vol. 153 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 9-22.

three elements of interpretation: the author, the text, and the reader.[69] Based upon his concept of "intrinsic genre,"[70] Hirsch argues that genre regulates the process of interpretation by constituting a kind of "contract" between the author and the reader and providing valid hermeneutical rules for determining the author's intended meaning—this is the prescriptive or normative function of genre. However, genre, as an inherent entity of all literary expression, also has a trans-cultural and universal dimension, working at the experiential and artistic level—this is the descriptive function of genre.[71] In fact, these prescriptive and descriptive functions of genre are intertwined in the hermeneutical process, unlocking what the author intended to say in the text and how the text conveys it.[72] Whereas the traditional view of genre has focused upon "the *what* of literature" more than "the *how* of literature," emphasizing its prescriptive and normative function,[73] modern literary theories of genre have often centered on "the *how* of literature," stressing the descriptive function of genre.[74]

Recently, there has been a growing interest within Psalm studies in more holistic interpretive methods that value both prescriptive and descriptive functions of

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[69]Osborne, "Genre Criticism," 184.

[70]Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 76. Hirsch defines intrinsic genre as "that sense of the whole by means of which an interpreter can correctly understand any part of its determinacy." Osborne claims that to properly understand the text, "the key is for the reader to align himself/herself with the originally intended genre." See also, Osborne, "*Genre Criticism*," 180.

[71]Ronald B. Allen, "A Response to Genre Criticism—Sensus Literalis," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 197-200.

[72]Ibid., 197.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Osborne, "Genre Criticism," 165.

genre. Since its inception, form criticism, with its various modifications, has been the predominant interpretive method of the Psalms.[75] Form-criticism basically aims to reconstruct the pre-historical and cultic stages of the Psalms by identifying their diverse forms and structures and relating them to different life-settings or rituals.[76] The value of form criticism lies in its insistence that different literary genres can make their points in different ways.[77] Knowing the different categories provides preliminary hermeneutical information.[78] However, in focusing too narrowly on the functions and life settings of various forms, form criticism has tended toward unfounded speculation with little value for discovering the meaning of an individual psalm. In addition, by distancing an individual text from its final form, the hypothetical form-critical approach to the Psalms has long blocked the proclamation of the certain Word of God.[79]

Recognizing the hermeneutical limitations of form criticism,[80] rhetorical criticism has shifted hermeneutical attention to the relationship between the message and medium of the text and its unique structural patterns. In studying individual psalms, rhetorical analysis of the message, medium, and mood of the text provides the preacher

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[75]Martin G. Klingbeil, "Off the Beaten Track: An Evangelical Reading of the Psalms without Gunkel," *BBR* 16, no. 1 (2006): 27.

[76]Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher*, 52-53.

[77]Ibid., 54.

[78]Duane A. Garrett, "Preaching from the Psalms and Proverbs," in *Preaching the Old Testament*, ed. Scott M. Gibson (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2006), 113.

[79]Denise Dombkowski Hopkins, "New Directions in Psalms Research: Good News for Theology and Church," *SLJT* 24, no. 4 (September 1986): 279. See also Garrett, "Preaching from the Psalms and Proverbs," 113.

[80]James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969): 5. See also C. Clifton Black, "Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation," *ExT* 100, no. 7 (April 1989): 253.

with improved insights of the psalm's literary qualities. However, rhetorical critics, influenced by the notion of the text as independent of the author, often demean or deny the historicity of the text. In addition, they often neglect the canonical context of psalms and inadvertently employ an atomistic approach to the literary features, removing the author as the determiner of textual meaning from the text. Furthermore, moving away from the author and then from the text in hermeneutical discussion, literary and rhetorical criticism often facilitates pluralism in meaning, a common problem plaguing reader-oriented hermeneutics. Thus, while rhetorical analysis of the Psalms is essential, it should be practiced only on the basis of author-centered hermeneutic.

In response to the hermeneutical failure of the historical-critical methods, canonical criticism[81] emphasizes the final form of the canon with its normative function for the people of God.[82] While canonical criticism shares a common interest with rhetorical criticism in its concern "to do justice to the integrity of the text apart from diachronical reconstruction," it goes beyond rhetorical criticism by interpreting the text from a theological perspective.[83] Accordingly, the main concern of canonical criticism is "to understand the nature of the theological shape of the text rather than to recover an original literary or aesthetic unity."[84] Canonical criticism reveals an enormous richness of theological interpretation at the macro level as well as thematic links between individual

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[81]Canonical criticism and redaction criticism are distinguishable and yet have become closely related. This dissertation only deals with canonical criticism which builds on the redaction of the individual psalms and their totality.

[82]Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher*, 74-76.

[83]Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 74.

[84]Ibid.

psalms at the micro level (the message of the text).[85] However, it unfortunately tends to bypass the study of the unique literary and generic features embedded in an individual psalm and how they function in the hermeneutical process (the medium and mood of the text). Nonetheless, by insisting upon the relevance of the Psalms as the eternal Word of God to today's community of faith,[86] canonical criticism is a helpful method for discovering authorial intent based upon the final form of the Psalms.[87]

Linguistics has significantly contributed to a communication model of interpretation. Speech-act theory is a relatively recent linguistic and literary theory which challenges the traditional concept that a statement merely describes.[88] Basically, speech-act theory suggests that to say something is not only to communicate knowledge but also to *do* something.[89] Especially, speech-act theory helps the interpreter understand the

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[85]Howard "Recent Trends in Psalms Study," 332-33.

[86]For the evangelical modifications of canonical criticism of the Psalms, see Bruce K. Waltke, "A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms," in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of C. L. Feinberg*, ed. J. S. Feinberg and P. D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 3-18.

[87]Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher*, 77.

[88]According to speech-act theory, there are three actions associated with communication: the speaker's saying, the speaker's verbal action, and the hearer's response. Austin introduces basic terms and definitions that help express the ideas of speech-act theory. While naming *a locution* as what is said (the speaker's saying), Austin calls *an illocution* as what is doing (accomplishing) something in saying (the speaker's verbal actions such as warning, encouraging, rebuking, and so forth) and *a perlocution* as what the hearer does in response to that utterance (the hearer's response). Thus, *an illocution* is the force of the locution and a *perlocution* is basically the response of hearers. However, Altson distinguished a *perlocutionary* intention from an unintended *perlocution*; the former is the speaker's intention for response by hearers, the latter is unintended response by hearers. For the terms and basic definitions of speech-act theory, see J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), and William P. Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

[89]Brevard S. Childs, "Speech-act Theory and Biblical Interpretation," *SJT* 58, no. 4 (2005): 377. For more detailed study of speech act theory, see Daniel Patte, "Speech Act Theory and Biblical Exegesis," *Semeia* 41 (1988): 85-102; J. Eugene Botha, "The Potential of Speech Act Theory for New Testament Exegesis: Some Basic Concepts," *HTS* 47 (1991): 297-303; Richard Briggs, *Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 3-143; idem, "The Use of Speech Act Theory in Biblical Interpretation." *Current Research in Biblical Studies* 9 (2001): 229-76;

function and the non-propositional aspect of biblical literature, emphasizing the functional nature of language which both says and does things. In addition to maintaining the Reformation tradition of grammatical-historical exegesis,[90] speech-act theory requires the interpreter to be sensitive to genre characteristics and the literary conventions of the text (the descriptive function of the genre), lest he neglect *how* the text communicates and unwittingly diminish a text's peculiar power or force which the divine/human author has also intended.[91] In this sense, speech-act theory's correlation of the authorial intention of the text along with the function (purpose), message (intellectual content), the medium (literary features), and mood (emotional impact) of the text can be a welcome addition to a traditional hermeneutic of the Psalms.[92]

A faithful hermeneutic of the God-given text should not put asunder what the divine/biblical authors have joined together. In fact, all of these interpretive methods are important to the whole sermon-making process if a preacher wishes to exposit accurate interpretation of the poetic text. Thus, the method proposed in this dissertation utilizes the accumulated positive contributions (hermeneutical synthesis) of form criticism, rhetorical criticism, canonical criticism, and speech-act theory. The proposed holistic method for preaching the laments respects the function, message, medium, and mood of the text, and endeavors to capture the full spectrum of the text based on an author-centered and more

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idem, "Getting Involved: Speech Acts and Biblical Interpretation," *Anvil* 20 (2003): 25-34; Scott A. Blue, "Meaning, Intention, and Application: Speech Act Theory in the Hermeneutics of Francis Watson and Kevin J. Vanhoozer," *TJ* 23 (2002): 161-84; and Vanhoozer, "From Speech Acts to Scriptures Acts,"1-49.

[90]Vanhoozer, "The Semantics of Biblical Literature," 91-92.

[91]Ibid., 93.

[92]Briggs, "Uses of Speech-Act Theory," 263.

genre-sensitive hermeneutic. Finally, the suggested method involves the whole process of interpretation between the author and the text and then between the text and the reader.

Preaching as Transformational Communication

The purpose of preaching is "to see God change the lives of listeners by the Word that is preached."[93] Expositors pursue transformational communication, seeking to move listeners toward a biblically-shaped life. In this sense, persuasion is indispensable in preaching, and many homileticians acknowledge the necessity of persuasion for effective preaching.[94]

However, preaching that pursues transformational communication should be distinct from mere informational communication.[95] Accurate exegesis of the text does not in itself persuade people to change their lives. Informational communication falls short of the purpose of preaching, transformational communication. The cognitive domain of preaching should be accompanied by the affective domain of preaching. Since reason and emotion are both active in the same mind, and thought and feeling combine in preaching, effective communication should arouse a proper affection for the message proclaimed. Furthermore, the truth proclaimed must be accompanied not only by emotion, but also by life-changing action. Creating an effective emotional connection can help the truth proclaimed be easily transferred into action in preaching.

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[93]York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 17.

[94]John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4th ed, rev. Vernon L. Stanfield (New York: HarperCollins, 1979), 170; Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody, 1999) 23; and Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 34-35.

[95]York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 12.

In terms of preaching as persuasion, sermon forms and styles, whether they work directly or indirectly, are important channels for persuasion.[96] An appropriate use of form and language not only allows the message to be communicated effectively, but also co-determines the listener's response, elicits his interest and participation, and shapes his attitudes.[97] Accordingly, different forms and varied styles offer the listeners different ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.[98]

The book of Psalms is intended to inform our intellect, to arouse our emotion, and to direct our wills.[99] The text expresses the author's intended meaning embedded within an intentional mood directed toward intended directions of the reader's will; thus, a faithful expositor will respect the full scope of the text and present a sermon that reflects not only the message of the text but also its mood for transformational communication.[100] Thus, identifying the mood of a psalm and applying it to mood of the sermon is a faithful and effective way to honor divine persuasive strategies for transformational communication while neither neglecting the essential genre of the text nor manipulating the listeners with inauthentic emotional appeals.[101]

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[96]Henry Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1948), 5; Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher*, 18-20.

[97]Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher*, 141-42.

[98]O. Wesley Allen, *Determining the Form: Structures for Preaching* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 5.

[99]Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 75-85.

[100]Robinson, "Homiletics and Hermeneutics," 814. Robinson correctly states that "exegesis and hermeneutics should be also reflected in the sermon's mood."

[101]Ferguson believes that whenever a preacher uses languages or stories designed to evoke an emotive response, manipulation occurs. However, he underestimates the centrality of emotion in the biblical text and in God-given human nature. This writer contends that aiding listeners to sense the mood of the text according to the biblical author's intention cannot be called 'manipulation.' Robert U. Ferguson Jr.,

In addition, the Psalms contains a variety of symmetric, parallel, and linear configurations.[102] Through a variety of textual structures, different messages of the Psalms express different moods.[103] Within the variety of structures, figurative language, images, and word pictures also convey emotion-laden truths. In other words, a psalm's structure and style work in unison with the cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions of the text.[104] Consequently, identifying the medium of the text and allowing its designed effect to shape the sermon is a way of honoring the Psalm's persuasive vehicle by letting the text establish the purpose, message, medium, and mood of the sermon.[105]

In sum, based upon basic components of expository preaching—a high view of Scripture, author-centered hermeneutic, and transformational communication, a holistic method for respecting the purpose, message, medium, and mood of the text is a text-honoring and text-driven method for reflecting the divine persuasive strategies embedded in the full spectrum of text into sermonic elements with the aim of the total transformation of the listeners involving their intellect, emotion, and volition.

A Clarification of Hermeneutical/Homiletical Position

A clarification of a hermeneutical and homiletical position is first needed to

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"Motivation or Manipulation in the Pulpit," *Preaching* 6 (May-June 1991): 11.

[102]David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 174.

[103]H. Wayne House and Daniel G. Garland, *God's Message, Your Sermons: How to Discover, Develop, and Deliver What God Meant by What He Said* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 197.

[104]Ronald J. Allen, "Shaping Sermons by the Language of the Text," in *Preaching Biblically: Creating Sermons in the Shape of Scripture*, ed. Don M. Wardlaw (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1983), 30.

[105]R. Albert Mohler Jr., *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Chicago: Moody, 2008), 67.

process this study. Since the last century, psalm interpretation has shifted from a diachronical approach to a synchronic approach in focus.[106] Whereas historical-criticism and form-criticism proved primarily interested in a diachronical approach to psalm interpretation, focusing on reconstructing the "original text" by identifying the historical author and context of a given psalm, rhetorical criticism, canonical criticism, and discourse analysis in recent decades proved primarily interested in a synchronic approach to the Psalm interpretation, emphasizing the final form of the text.

Like other biblical texts, the proper interpretation of a psalm needs both diachronic and synchronic hermeneutical approaches. It is true that the more information as to original author and context of a psalm an interpreter as a preacher has, the better the interpretation of a psalm he can attain with a clear understanding of the original author's intent in the text. Despite the importance of diachronical hermeneutical approaches, the history of psalm interpretation indicates that diachronical hermeneutical approaches toward an attempt to reconstruct the historical author and social or cultic contexts of the text have ironically become a stumbling block to preaching the Psalms. However, this does not mean that any diachronical approach is useless for interpreting and preaching of the psalms. This indicates that for preaching a lament psalm, an interpreter as preacher should be focused on the text to identify the (authorial) meaning of the text based upon text-guided historicity.[107] Accordingly, a hermeneutical matrix in this dissertation is

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[106]Mays, "Past and Present," 31-40.

[107]Two fundamental reasons for this claim can be provided. First, with a given text, in this case, a lament psalm, an interpreter barely attains the original historical precision as to authorship and contexts of the text by external or internal clues. Related to the first reason, the second reason is that the book of psalms as poetry genre that divine/human authors choose to communicate is primarily by its characteristics less time-bounded than any other biblical genres. In other words, it is a literary genre, used not for historicizing an event or experience in the search of historical precision, but for realizing from an

primarily focused on a synchronic approach to psalm interpretation. However, this method is not a mere synchronic approach to the exclusion of any diachronic approach to psalm studies. Instead, I agree that a diachronic approach to the historical original author and context is a necessary element to interpreting and preaching the psalms. However, for discovering the authorial intent expressed in the text, a diachronic approach in this dissertation does not begin with hypothetical assumptions on the original author or context of the text. Rather, it starts with the canonical text that has already been given to us, following the textual guidance for identifying the historical author or context in the search of understanding the authorial intent of the text. In this sense, the hermeneutical matrix of this dissertation is a synchronic-driven diachronic approach, not the other way around. In short, the hermeneutical and thus homiletical method of this dissertation is basically a text-driven, yet author-centered approach to psalm interpretation.

A Clarification of Some Terminologies

Having clarified the hermeneutical and homiletical method of this study, distinguishing the terms used in this dissertation from those that other hermeneutical methodological matrices are also of importance.

First, the concept of genre used in this study is different from that of form criticism. Whereas the genre or forms in form criticism basically mean linguistically or structurally typical forms or patterns, to which a limited habitual cultic or particular social context gave rise, the term, genre in this study means a literary and communicational convention as a historical formation which the original author

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event or experience by its looseness of historical origin. For the trans-historical and trans-cultural aspects of the book of psalms, see Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 18-28.

employed to communicate his intended meaning and to attain his communicational purpose and effect.

Second, the configuration of the text of this study is based upon a given canonical text, rather than the "original text" which a historical critical matrix or form-critical matrix presume. Additionally, when this study uses the term, the text, it does not have the concept of text as a mere literary product, with which some literary and rhetorical critics based upon the autonomy of the text often totally neglect or ignore the author. Rather, the text in this study is the written Word of God that has necessarily literary dimensions when the divine/human authors used literary devices for communicating His/his intended meaning and purpose.

Third, as Vanhoozer well states, "Texts without historical author are texts without meaning,"[108] the term of the author means a historical figure who actually wrote the text, although he cannot be precisely identified in the text. Thus, the term of the author in this study is not an implied or theoretical author as a pure literary device for explaining the textual meaning as in some synchronic approaches.

Fourth, the term of the context of the text in this study is not limited to cultic or politico-social settings that form-criticism emphasizes, but the historical contexts in which the text was actually written in a certain point of the history. Yet, this does not mean that the historical contexts of the text can be verified by historical-critical approaches to the text. The historical context in this study is a text-guided historical location. Although it is true that a historical context based upon the textual clues is very

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[108]Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?*, 234.

extensive and elusive so that it can be applied to multiple contexts, this study assumes that a text-guided historical context is not detrimental to understanding the author's intent but is sufficient for grasping it.

In short, following the text-driven and author-centered hermeneutic, this study is based upon a given canonical text and the concept of genre, in this study, is a literary and communicational convention as historical formation, including textual components and contextual features, which the historical author chose for communicating his intended meaning and purpose to the audience.

Methodology and Procedural Outline

The aim of this dissertation is to provide hermeneutical and homiletical guidelines for a more genre-sensitive expository preaching of the lament psalms, reflecting the message, medium, and mood of the text into a sermon throughout the whole expository sermon-making process. To achieve this purpose, I first established the necessity of including the message, medium, and mood of the text for genre-sensitive expository preaching of the Psalms based upon the basic convictions of expository preaching—a high view of scripture, author-centered hermeneutic, and transformational communication. I explore the necessity and procedure for genre-sensitive sermon preparation of lament psalms based upon the analysis and appreciation of the three genre-essentials—the message, medium, and mood of the text, contextual features, and their interrelations in the exegetical, theological, and homiletical processes. As a result, this dissertation provides principles for genre-sensitive sermon preparation of the lament psalms, necessarily engaging with constructive insights from literary hermeneutical theories (form-criticism, rhetorical criticism, canonical criticism, and speech-act theory)

and homiletical theories. Based upon principle-practice coherence, this dissertation also substantiates the principles by applying a twelve-step hermeneutical and homiletical procedure to a selected psalm (Ps 31).

Based upon the clarifications of methodology and terminology of this study, the dissertation has six procedural chapters. The first chapter sets out the task to be accomplished by identifying the problems, aims, and methods employed for the discussion. This chapter establishes the necessity and importance of a holistic method for honoring the message, medium, and mood of the text for genre-sensitive expository preaching of the lament psalms. It proceeds from the theological, hermeneutical, and homiletical foundations of expository preaching, which can be respectively delineated as a high view of Scripture, an author-centered hermeneutic, and preaching as transformational communication.

In chapter 2, I discuss a genre-sensitive exegetical process for preaching the lament psalms. I first propose a holistic exegetical method which includes analyses of the message, medium, and the mood of a lament psalm and seeks a unified analysis and appreciation of their interactions. In particular, I emphasize that exegeting the mood of the text is a necessary complementary tool for structural/thematic analysis of a lament psalm, because the mood of the text clarifies the message and exhibits the medium of the text. Then I delineate a step-by-step holistic exegetical procedure, considering genre-based textual components (the message, medium, and mood of the text) and contextual features (the purpose).

In chapter 3, I advance a holistic genre-sensitive theological process for preaching the lament psalms. I first argue for the necessity of genre consideration for the

genre-sensitive theological process for preaching a lament psalm. Based upon the necessity of genre consideration in developing the theological/doctrinal big idea(s) of a lament psalm and in discerning the timeless theological implication and communicational impact of genre-characteristics of the text, I also provide a step-by-step holistic theological procedure.

In chapter 4, I seek a genre-sensitive homiletical process for preaching the lament psalms by explaining the necessity and the procedure of a holistic homiletical method for reflecting the purpose, message, medium, and mood of the text into the basic homiletical framework (the homiletical purpose, message, medium, mood) and other actual sermon components (explanation, illustration, application, introduction, and conclusion) based upon the basic homiletical framework. I also delineate the procedure for a holistic homiletical method.

In chapter 5, I demonstrate the validity of the proposed genre-sensitive exegetical, theological, and homiletical process by applying a twelve-step hermeneutical and homiletical procedure proposed in the previous chapters to the selected Psalm 31.

In the final chapter, I summarize the study by reviewing the twelve-step hermeneutical and homiletical procedure for genre-sensitive preaching of the lament psalms based upon the principles and a demonstration given in the previous chapters.

Limitations

Several limitations of this dissertation should be noted. First, the scope of this dissertation is limited to the study of the lament psalms for genre-sensitive expository preaching. Second, this dissertation will not detail the whole process of genre-sensitive preaching, but rather will focus upon the principles derived from the analysis and

appreciation of the message, medium, and mood of the text and their interrelations. Third, although the principles for the suggested holistic method are based upon the commonalities of all lament psalms, only Psalm 31 is thoroughly examined to assess the methodology for the lament psalms. Fourth, this dissertation does not discuss in-depth theological/doctrinal and intertexual issues of the Psalms, but rather focuses on how the theological/doctrinal big idea(s) can be developed during the theological process, in which the preacher necessarily considers the author-intended meaning from the textual, biblical theological, and systematic theological perspectives. Fifth, this dissertation does not elaborate upon the essential role of the Holy Spirit in the sermon-making processes.

CHAPTER 2

A GENRE-SENSITIVE EXEGETICAL PROCESS FOR PREACHING A LAMENT PSALM

Introduction

The primary goal of this chapter is to establish a genre-sensitive exegetical process for preaching the lament psalms. This discussion begins with the necessity of a holistic exegetical method, including not only analysis of the text's message (intellectual content) and medium (structure and style), but also analysis and appreciation of the mood (emotional content and effect) of the text. In addition to an established structural/thematic analytical approach to poetic texts, this discussion proposes an emotional approach as an essential tool for identifying the authorial meaning and intent of the lament psalms.

This chapter delineates a step-by-step procedure for holistic exegesis of lament psalms, considering the genre-based textual components, the genre-based contextual features, and their interactions with the semantic meaning and pragmatic aspects of the text. The process follows four steps—preliminary study of the text and survey of the contexts, analyzing the semantic meaning and textual organization (the medium-focused, message-focused, and mood-focused approaches), analyzing the pragmatic aspects (communicational purpose and effect) of the text with the consideration of contextual features, and establishing genre-sensitive exegetical findings. This procedure entails discussion of appropriate literary and linguistic hermeneutical theories such as form criticism, rhetorical criticism, canonical criticism, and speech-act theory.

The Necessity of a Holistic Exegetical Method for Lament Psalms

To communicate Hebrew poetic texts accurately and effectively, the preacher must first understand their unique features and how these features function.[1] In explaining the dynamics of the poetic genre, many scholars identify the characteristics of biblical poetry with the literary elements including terse lines, overt parallelism, formal structures, and frequent use of figures.[2] Thus, unlike other genres, the structure and style of the poetic text (the medium of the text) is the most distinctive feature, to which the interpreter should be attentive in discovering the author's intended meaning and purpose throughout the exegetical process.

However, it is not easy for the interpreter to grasp these literary features of the Psalms, because they function at both the cognitive (the message of the text) and the non-cognitive levels, especially at the emotive level (the mood of the text). In line with the church fathers like St. Athanasius and St. Augustine,[3] Martin Luther commented on the emotional dimension of the Psalms,

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[1]Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 174.

[2]William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 274. See also Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic, 1985), x; Adele Berline, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 16; Tremper Longman III, "The Analysis of Poetic Passages," in *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 119-20; and Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 314-18.

[3]See Athanasius, "The Letter of St. Athanasius to Marcellinus on the Interpretation of the Psalms," in *On the Incarnation: the Treaties De Incanatione Verbi Dei* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 99-102; and Michael Fiedrowicz, Introduction, in *Expositions of the Psalms,* by St. Augustine, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the Twenty-first Century*, vol. 15, trans. John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2000), 38.

> Where does one find finer words of joy than in the Psalms of praise and thanksgiving? There you look into the hearts of all saints, as into fair and pleasant gardens, yes, as into heaven itself. There you see what fine and pleasant flowers of the heart spring up from all sorts of fair and happy thoughts toward God, because of all his blessings. On the other hand, where do you find deeper, more sorrowful, more pitiful words of sadness than in the psalms of lamentation? There again you look into the hearts of all the saints, as into death, yes, as into hell itself. How gloomy and dark it is there, with all kinds of troubled forebodings about the wrath of God! So, too, when they speak of fear and hope, they use such words that no painter could so depict for your fear or hope, and no Cicero or other orator so portray them.[4]

John Calvin also wrote concerning the emotional quality of the psalms,

> I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, "An Anatomy of All the Parts of the Soul"; for there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that in not here represented as in mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated.[5]

Echoing Calvin's opinion, many contemporary biblical scholars recognize the emotional element of the Psalms.[6] In short, the distinctive nature of the poetic genre lies in the fact that it conveys not only the intellectual content (message) but also the emotional content (mood) of the biblical poem through its unique literary features such as terseness, high level of structure, and figurative language (medium). In fact, it seems

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[4]Martin Luther, *Word and Sacrament I*, ed. E. Theodore Bachmann, trans. Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960), 255-56.

[5]John Calvin, *Joshua and the Psalms 1-35, Calvin's Commentaries,* ed. Christopher Fetherstone (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 36-37.

[6]See Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 523; Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary,* Augsburg Old Testament Studies (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 18-19; Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 75-85; James L. Mays, *The Lord Reign: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 46; C. Hassel Bullock, *Encountering the Book of the Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction,* Encountering Biblical Studies (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 46; J. Clinton McCann Jr. and James C. Howell, *Preaching the Psalms* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 34; and John C. Endres, "Praying with Psalms: A School of Prayer," in *Psalms and Practice: Worship, Virtue, and Authority* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001), 72.

nearly impossible for the interpreter to draw a definite line between three pairs of elements in poetry—content and form, meaning and feeling, and intention and effect.

In particular, the lament psalms depict the psalmists' experiences in distress, and accordingly the emotional dimension of the text becomes obvious with such expressions as complaint, anger, grief, despair, and protest to God. Moreover, in a lament psalm, the interpreter can easily recognize the fact that thematic points, structural patterns, and emotional movements are closely interlocked. Accordingly, in order to interpret and communicate the poetic text in general and a lament in particular, the preacher needs a comprehensive and integrated method that can help him grasp not only its message through its medium but also its emotive overtones, that is, the mood of the text through its message and medium.

An Analytical Approach to the Lament Psalms

Although a lament psalm is a poetic text full of emotional elements, the interpretation of a lament psalm indisputably needs a skillful analytical exegesis.[7] This analytical approach to the lament psalm usually requires the interpreter to exercise the structural/thematic analysis and the stylistic/thematic analysis.

The Structural/Thematic Analysis

Parallelism. When reading each line, the basic unit of a Hebrew poem, the interpreter can sense the structural and thematic correspondence between the lines—that is the essence of parallelism. In other words, the interpreter can identify a certain flow of

[7]In fact, the preliminary identification of any poetic text in the Old Testament is grounded in analytical observations of grammatical-syntactical features. See Bruce Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 250; and Hill and Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament*, 307.

a thought or conceptual relationship in parallel lines. In fact, parallelism is probably the most discussed element that should be analyzed in interpreting a poetic text, because this sentence structure or verse form enables the exegete to see the thought-development in the psalm.[8] Although no consensus exists on the exact number and nomenclature of types of parallelism,[9] such analysis leads the interpreter to a better understanding of a psalm and thus it is the basic task for the exegete in understanding a psalm.

Strophe or stanza. In addition to analysis of parallelism, Kaiser stresses the importance of analyzing the strophe to determine the main divisions of psalms and the main points of psalms. While stating that "what the paragraph is to the exegete of prose, the strophe is to the exegete of poetry," he contends that the strophe exhibits a central rallying point around which a psalm's content is organized.[10] Thus, in interpreting a lament psalm, the interpreter must analyze parallel lines and group them into a strophe, focusing on a common related theme. In addition, by discovering thought-development or thought-break between the lines and considering other structural patterns (linear, parallel, and symmetrical patterns) and rhetorical-literary devices (acrostic arrangement, alliteration, chiasm, comparison, and ellipsis), the interpreter can segment a lament psalm

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[8]Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 187; Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), 227.See also Andrew J. Schmutzer, "Preaching from the Poetic Books," in *The Moody Handbook of Preaching*, ed. John Koessler (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 168.

[9]The definitions and types of parallelism vary according to scholars. Lowth focused only three types of parallelism—synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic. Robert Lowth, *Isaiah: A New Translation, with a Preliminary Dissertation and Notes, Critical, Philosophical, and Explanatory* (Boston: Pierce, 1834), ix. Geller identifies three groups of parallelism: grammatical, semantic, and rhetorical. Stephen A. Geller, *Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry* (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1979), 5. Kugel, however, limits parallelism to only one type: "A, and what is more, B." James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 1-58.

[10]Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 214.

into stanzas, which help the exegete better understand the flow of the psalmist's thoughts in a whole psalm. In short, the structural/thematic analysis of a lament psalm in a circular way not only guides the interpreter to understand the basic structural unit and major structural divisions of the psalm, but also aids him to have a better understanding of its central message and the main points.[11]

The Stylistic/Thematic Analysis

Images and figures. Based upon a structural/thematic analysis of a lament psalm, the interpreter must employ a stylistic/thematic analysis as well. A psalm in parallelistic verses exhibits a wealth of figures and images in the concrete and familiar terms of daily life. With the use of an image or figure, the psalmist provides a vivid mental picture of a thought or theme in a new way by creating multiple associations between a subject he is speaking of and the aspect he is transferring to the subject.[12] In pursuit of finding the psalmist's intended association and meaning, the exegete must attentively analyze these multiple associations within the cultural and literary contexts[13] Thus, the stylistic/thematic analysis of various figures and images is an essential analytical tool in the exegetical process to understand the psalm properly.[14]

In summary, the poetic structure (parallelistic line, strophe, and stanza) and the

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[11]Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 123-25.

[12]Mark D. Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*, Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis, ed. David M. Howard Jr. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 44-47.

[13]Ibid., 47-49. Futato offers three basic steps for analyzing poetic images: (1) identify the target domain, (2) study the source domain, and (3) identify the aspect of the source that is associated with the target.

[14]J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hand-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 352-60.

poetic style (figures of speech and images) used in the Psalms are essential elements that the interpreter should carefully analyze to comprehend the content and details of a lament psalm. The interpreter must first approach the text analytically to understand how the medium (structure and style) of the text is associated with its message (theme) and vice versa.

An Emotional Approach to the Lament Psalms

The necessity of an analytical approach in interpreting a lament psalm, however, does not mean that the original author's intent can be fully analyzed by it. In fact, a concept-focused structural/thematic analysis of a lament psalm plays only a partial role in grasping authorial intent and meaning. Concerning the limitations of an analytical approach to the Psalms, Longman states, "The trick is to learn how to read poetry in a way that respects its original, heart-targeted intention without doing so much analysis that we suck the life out of it."[15] Unfortunately, much study of the Psalms in general and the lament psalms in particular is often limited to analytical interpretation. Criticizing the dominance of the analytical approach to interpreting and preaching psalms, Jeffrey Arthur correctly observes,

> The psalms are personal. But how can we turn subjective experience into public address? The psalms are lyrical—full of emotion and image. How, though, can we translate highly artistic language into vernacular? You can see why some preachers avoid the psalms. Their intuition tells them that we murder when we dissect.[16]

In a similar way, concerning the current tendency to minimize the emotional dimension

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[15]Tremper Longman III, *Reading the Bible with Heart and Mind* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1997), 131.

[16]Jeffrey D. Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety: How to Re-create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 39.

of psalms, Duvall and Hays write,

> The poetry of the Old Testament actually focuses on our emotional response to God as well as on our emotional response to those who are hostile to God and his people. The poetry of the Old Testament connects with us down deep, both in joy and in despair. It resounds in our hearts and stirs us spiritually and emotionally. We should not minimize it. Instead, we should drink deeply of it.[17]

Given the intention of poetry to communicate both cognitive and non-cognitive messages in a psalm,[18] the preacher must utilize a holistic interpretive approach that goes beyond a mere analytical approach to the psalm.[19] If this is true of interpretation of the poetic genre in general, then it should be truer of interpretation of the lament psalms in particular, because the lament genre is the polar opposite of the hymn on the emotional spectrum and is primarily defined by its emotional aspects.[20] Therefore, an emotional approach, alongside a structural/thematic approach, to the text is an essential interpretive tool in terms of the nature of genre to facilitate understanding of a lament psalm. In fact, the necessity of an emotional approach to interpretation of a lament becomes more evident when one recognizes the emotional intents, elements, and movements which the author embodied in the poetic text.

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[17]Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 347.

[18]In explaining the communicative ways of poetry, Brown states, "Poetry is meta-cognitive; it does more, not less, than communicate on a cognitive level." Jeannie K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 148-49.

[19]Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 46. In this regard, while calling Calvin's interpretive method a paradigmatic method in which the original psalmist's experience became a paradigm or pattern for measuring and understanding one's own experience, Bullock asserts that the historical-grammatical interpretation is the place an exegete should begin his interpretation of psalms and that the paradigmatic method is also appropriate for interpreting psalms.

[20]Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 26.

Emotional Intents of the Psalm

When an expositor interprets a psalm or lament, his primary goal in the exegetical process is to find the author's intent. The authorial intent in a psalm or lament psalm should not be limited to a cognitive meaning because the inspired biblical author of the psalm intended to communicate not only the cognitive dimension of the meaning but also the non-cognitive dimension that is embedded in that meaning. Concerning the presence of emotional intention in the Psalms, Fee and Stuart write,

> The psalms are intended to appeal to emotions to evoke feelings rather than propositional thinking, and to stimulate a response on the part of the individual that goes beyond a mere cognitive understanding of certain facts—this, after all, is the very reason musical poems are so well-loved.[21]

Osborne also asserts that poetry is intended to be emotive, while the genre of prose "was inadequate to express the deep yearnings of the soul, and poetry as an emotional, deep expression of faith and worship became a necessity."[22] Estes contends that "as poems, psalms endeavor to recreate the author's experience in the reader, rather than just report that experience. . . . Consequently, they must be appreciated as well as analyzed."[23] Other scholars also emphasize the author's emotional intention in psalms.[24]

In terms of preaching the psalms, Stevenson stresses the emotional intention over the cognitive intention in preaching.[25] Concerning preaching the lament psalms,

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[21]Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 207.

[22]Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral,* 181.

[23]Daniel J. Estes, *Handbook on the Wisdom and Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 114.

[24]Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 113.See also Alexander Haddow, *On the Teaching of Poetry* (London: Blackie & Son, 1949), 27; and Charlotte I. Lee, *Oral Reading of the Scriptures* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 143.

[25]Dwight E. Stevenson, *In the Biblical Preacher's Workshop* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1967),

Villanueva argues that since these psalms are primarily concerned with emotions and experiences, the task of the preacher in the exegetical process is "to see the different ways in which these experiences are presented, to feel their texture and shape as it were, to discern what 'perception of life' they are trying to communicate and to attempt to participate in their experiences."[26]

Thus, since a lament psalm is intended to communicate human emotions and experiences, and since the interpreter as a preacher has the responsibility to be true to the authorial intent, he must find and communicate them to the contemporary audience. Therefore, as Bullock asserts, since a poem's inherent emotional intention or orientation supplies a hermeneutical component for the total task of interpretation, the interpreter should use a proper hermeneutical method to grasp it.[27]

Emotional Elements of the Psalm

Several poetic and literary elements in the psalm provide direction for grasping the original author's emotional intent. Although scholars do not always agree on the value of each literary element, their cumulative contribution demonstrates a need for understanding these emotional aspects.

Emotion in literary types. The traditional classification of psalms was based upon their subject, theme, or topic. However, Gunkel has opened new ways of

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[26]Federico G. Villanueva, "Preaching Lament," in *Reclaiming the Old Testament for Christian Preaching*, ed. Grenville J. R. Kent, Paul J. Kissling, and Laurence A. Turner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 66-67.

[27]C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books* (Chicago: Moody, 1988), 125.

categorizing psalms by identifying three criteria—a similar setting in life, common thoughts and moods, and a shared form. Although scholars do not fully agree on how to categorize the types of psalms,[28] one of the contributions of form analysis of psalms is that understanding the literary type of a particular psalm assists greatly in grasping its emotional force. Concerning the emotional spectrums of the psalms, Westermann asserts that praise and lament are the two basic melodies or modes.[29] In a similar way, Kaiser states that psalms exhibit lament and praise as their two main divisions.[30] Longman also points out that "the Psalter moves back and forth in a continuum between lament and praise."[31] Concerning the two primal moods of the psalms, Allen also says that the message of a lament psalm may be summarized by two sentences, "God is good," and "life is tough."[32] Thus, despite the difficulty in classifying some psalms which contain elements of both types, considering the type of a psalm that provides its emotional backdrop enables the exegete to grasp the dominant emotional force of the psalm and how it changes or functions.

Emotion in parallelism. Parallelism is the basic sentence structure (a verse

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[28]Gunkel divides the psalms into four main types—hymns, community laments, individual thanksgiving, and individual lament; with various subtypes. Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, trans. Thomas M. Horner (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 7; Bratcher and Reyburn identify twelve different types of psalms. Robert G. Bratcher and William D. Reyburn, *A Handbook on Psalms* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 2-3.

[29]Clause Westermann, *The Psalms: Structure, Content & Message*, trans. Ralph D. Gehrke (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980), 10; idem, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 35, 79.

[30]Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching*, 121, 153.

[31]Tremper Longman III, "Psalms," in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 249; idem, *How to Read Psalms*, 77.

[32]C. Leslie Allen, *Word Biblical Themes: Psalms* (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 30, 34.

form) in which the psalmist communicates ideas, images, and emotions. Chisholm states that "a poem is a literary composition in parallelistic verse which conveys experiences, ideas, and emotions in a vivid and imaginative way and utilizes imagery more extensively than prose does."[33] Obviously, parallelism has an important rhetorical function of adding intensity, emphasis, or nuance on an idea. In this sense, understanding parallelism assists the interpreter in analyzing ideas or a balance and progression of ideas in a psalm. However, parallelism serves a greater role—adding affective force to meaning.[34] In fact, one of the rhetorical effects of parallelism is to prompt the reader to meditate and thus to allow him to catch the different hues and tones of an idea, image, or emotion. Considering this two-sided, yet one functional aspect of parallelism, Ryken notes,

> The complementary parts of a parallel construction reinforce an idea in our conscience. There can be no doubt that if we read biblical poetry as slowly as it is meant to be read, it is a very affective form of discourse. The meanings sink into our consciousness with great force because of the element of repetition and retardation.[35]

In a similar vein, while explaining the characteristics of the lament psalms, Kaiser asserts that the *qinah* pattern [36] within a parallelistic structure adds to the affective power that matches the content of the psalm.[37] Arthurs also comments that the significant emotional

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[33]Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 169.

[34]Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 181.

[35]Ibid., 184.

[36]The *qinah* pattern is the most typical pattern of 3+2, 4+3, or even 4+2 words in two lines (parallelism) in the psalms. W. R. Garr, "The Qinah: A Study of Poetic Meter, Syntax, and Style," *Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 95 (1983): 54-55.

[37]Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching*, 122-23.

impact of parallelism accompanies with the intensification of ideas.[38] Perhaps a series of rhetorical questions in the lament psalms ("How long . . . ?"or "Why? . . .?") can be the most distinguishing example.[39] Although the use of poetic language is the direct means that conveys and intensifies the emotional content, the interpreter should not miss that the emotional intensification on the level of rhetorical effect consists partly of the presence of parallelism.

Emotion in poetic language and imagery. According to Stein, two general kinds of language exist: "referential language" and "commissive language."[40] Unlike the former, which is more cognitive in its aim, the latter has as its main goal "evoking decisions, conveying emotions, eliciting feelings, and arousing the emotions" with connotative meanings.[41] In this regard, poetic language is closer to "commissive language" than "referential language." Hence, the rich potentials of connotations within the concentrated parallelistic structure empower poetic language to recreate the poet's

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[38]While explaining rhetorical impact of parallelism with the example of Ps 51:7-8 ("Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean/ wash me, and I will be whiter than snow/ Let me hear joy and gladness/ let the bones you have crushed rejoice" ESV), Arthurs asserts that parallelism also intensifies the reading and listening experience, rather than merely repeating ideas and intensifying ideas. Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety*, 43.

[39]While the interrogative form of "Why . . . ?" appears at least five times in Pss 10, 22, 42, 43, and 88, the forms of "How long . . . ?" appears in Pss 4, 6, 13, 35, and 62. Concerning the emotional intensification of these interrogative forms, Ps 13 can be a good example; "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?/ How long will you hid your face from me?/ How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? / How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?" (ESV)With the repetitive use of "How long" in parallelistic structures, the psalmist escalates the rhetorical effect at the levels of intellectual content and emotional impact.

[40]Robert H. Stein, *Playing by the Rules: A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 73.

[41]Ibid.

experience in the reader, moving beyond the communication of facts—denotations.[42] This characteristic of poetic language is easily recognized by its reliance on images and figures of speech.

Psalms present extremely image-rich language. Imagery is an effective way of both conveying information and evoking an emotional response. By making the abstract concrete images that prompt the reader's sensory imagination (the image-making capacity through comparison), the psalmist conveys the fullness of experiential truth with emotional overtones.[43] In this regard, Ryken explains that determining the logic of the images in the psalm is one of the chief tasks in interpreting the text, yet he also emphasizes that the typical strategy of the poet is "to picture an emotion as a series of concrete images."[44] Thus, he concludes that the prevalence of images in poetry requires the interpreter to experience poetry with his senses and then analytically determine the connotations and logic of the images in their poetic context.[45]

Along with imagery, figures of speech, especially metaphor and simile are the most pervasive element in poetic language.[46] Metaphors and similes carry a form of logic and thus can profitably be analyzed as such in interpreting the psalms. However, they

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[42]Daniel J. Estes, "The Hermeneutics of Biblical Lyric Poetry," *BSac* 152, no. 680 (1995): 421.

[43]Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 117. See also Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 90.

[44]Ryken, *Words of Delight*, 160.

[45]Ibid., 162.

[46]For the excellent resources on the general subjects of the imagery and figures of speech, See G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980); and E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968). While defining a figure as a word or sentence used in a peculiar form different from its original or simplest meaning or use, Bullinger identifies its purpose with "giving additional force, more life, intensified feeling, and greater emphasis." Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, v.

communicate something beyond the logic and thus ask the reader to experience the topic.[47] Concerning the two-fold nature of metaphor and simile, Ryken asserts that the total meanings in the process of interpreting metaphor and simile are affective as well as intellectual, experiential as well as conceptual, and extra-logical as well as logical.[48] In addition, other figures of speech such as hyperbole, apostrophe, and personification also do not merely express a literal meaning but convey emotional truth and intensity for the sake of effect.[49]

In particular, concerning poetic language, especially the use of metaphors and similes in the lament psalms, Mays states,

> They [lament psalms] constantly employ metaphors and similes to convey meaning by stimulating and provoking the imagination. The vocabulary is often symbolic and elusive. The human condition is depicted in language that is typical, open, and evocative. The prayers [lament psalms] communicate with the reader by prompting associations and stirring emotions and inviting reflection.[50]

Thus, when the interpreter analyzes images and figures of speech in a lament psalm, he must consider what feelings, images, and experiences a psalmist intended to communicate through his poetic language as well as the cognitive ideas carried by such language.

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[47]For instances, the Psalmist in Ps 57:4 describes the cruelty of his enemies with several metaphors such as "lions" and "fiery beasts," whose teeth and tongues are "spears and arrows" and "sharp swords." The psalmist in Ps 58: 7-8 expresses the destruction of his enemies with a serious of similes such as "let them vanish like water," "let them be like the snail," and "like the stillborn child." By means of metaphors and similes, the psalmists involve the reader thinking and seeing the situations of their enemies through their imagination.

[48]Ryken, *How to Read the Bible*, 92-93.

[49]Ibid., 87-108. See also Ryken, *Words of Delight*, 176-80.

[50]James L. Mays, *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*, ed. Patrick D. Miller and Gene M. Tucker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 6.

Emotion in superscripts. The titles of many psalms enable interpreters to link the text with plausible historical contexts. Although scholars continue to debate the historicity of the superscriptions, their accuracy, their times of composition, and what some of their particular terms mean,[51] the superscriptions can at least provide valuable assistance in grasping the emotionality of the writers or editors through establishing elements such as authorship, historical origin, literary features, liturgical use, and musical notation.[52] Although a tension between the event referred in the title and the content of a psalm can be identified,[53] the superscripts of a lament psalm can help the interpreter to grasp the psalmist's intended emotion set in the text itself.

Emotional Movements of the Psalms

In interpreting a psalm, thought-development should be identified by analyzing the structure and style of the psalm. In the same way, a psalm's emotional movements should be identified. According to Miller, the emotional movement of the Psalms is always toward praise—in individual psalms and even in the shape of the Psalter as a whole.[54]

A sudden change of mood is especially characteristic of the lament psalms.

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[51]Estes, *Handbook on the Wisdom Books*, 141-44.

[52]Bullock, *Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Text*, 121-23. See also Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms,* 24-34. According to Bullock, knowing the musical terms assists the reader in understanding the content and mood of a particular psalm.

[53]For instance, the title of Ps 3 indicates that the event was the time when David fled from Absalom. Yet, the attitude of the psalmist toward his adversary in that Psalm is quite different that of David toward Absalom in 2 Sam 18 and 19.

[54]Miller states that the first half of the Psalter is dominated by laments. The Psalter moves increasingly to hymns of praise, with the ultimate climax being Ps 150 as the grand finale. Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 66-67.

With very few exceptions, lament psalms contain an emotional shift from petitions and complaints to statements of confidence and praise.[55] Many scholars have provided their own explanations for the rapid mood changes, based on form-critical, psychological, tradition-historical, theological, and rhetorical perspectives.[56] Although no univeral agreement has been achieved through those attempts, it is generally accepted that a change of mood in a lament psalm helps the exegete see a psalm's emotional turning point.[57] Accordingly, calling the sudden change of mood the "fulcrum," Lee explains:

> It [The fulcrum] may be a single word or an entire unit, but it is the point at which the poem turns or balances. . . . The fulcrum is not always as clearly evident in biblical poetry as in modern poetry, but an awareness of its presence can help immeasurably in retaining unity and building to the climax.[58]

In a lament psalm, the psalmist usually expresses the message of a psalm in a particular emotional tone until he reaches the "fulcrum," and then the tone of the psalm changes. Thus, when the interpreter examines where the "fulcrum" occurs, what kind of emotional shift occurs, and why it is placed where it is, he can better understand not only the message but also the emotional intent and impact of the psalm and thus communicate the psalmist's intended emotional movements.

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[55]Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 59-64, 75-81.

[56]LeAnn Snow Flesher, "Rapid Changes of Mood: Oracles of Salvation, Certainty of a Hearing, or Rhetorical Play?," in *My Words Are Lovely: Studies in the Rhetoric of the Psalms*, ed. Claudia V. Camp and Andrew Mein (New York: T&T Clark International, 2008), 45. See also Federico G. Villanueva, *The Uncertainty of a Hearing: A Study of the Sudden Change of Mood in the Psalms of Lament* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

[57]Kenneth W. Smith, "Preaching the Psalms with Respect for Their Inspired Design," *JEHS* 3, no. 2 (December 2003): 15, 20; and Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety*, 53.

[58]Lee, *Oral Reading of the Scriptures*, 146.

Toward an Integrated Approach to the Lament Psalms

Just as an analytical interpretation of a psalm (the message and medium-focused approach) is essential to finding the author's intended meaning, so too an emotional approach to the psalm (the mood-focused approach) is a crucial interpretive tool to find the author's intent. The emotional meaning is manifested in the literary types, parallelistic structures, figurative language, and especially emotional movements that interlock with the intellectual content. This explains why Lee and Gura state, "In poetry, the logical content and the emotive content are blended so completely that it is nearly impossible to tell where one ends and other begins."[59] Although a topic or idea may be of first importance in poetry, a psalm is also concerned with an emotional response to the idea, provoking emotive force behind that idea.[60] The lament psalms are full of the author's intended emotional contents, elements, and movements. Thus, the interpreter as a preacher should not limit his exegetical approach only to analytical elements of content and form and thereby minimize his efforts as to how best to understand and communicate the text.

In conclusion, while the interpreter should definitely continue the analysis of the message and medium of the psalm, he should supplement that structural/thematic analysis with an emotional appreciation of the lament psalms in particular. Indeed, interpreting the lament psalms with this holistic exegetical matrix, considering the message, medium, and mood of the poetic text, can greatly assist expositors in

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[59]Charlotte I. Lee and Timothy Gura, *Oral Interpretation*, 8th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 342.

[60]Ibid., 343.

discovering the total spectrum of the text and in being faithful to both what the biblical author intended to communicate and the nature of the poetic genre God used in the Scripture.

The Procedure for a Holistic Exegetical Method for Lament Psalms

In the previous section, I argued that a holistic exegetical method for a lament psalm should consider textual components of genre, including the message, medium, and especially mood. In the following section, I show how a holistic exegetical method can be practiced in the exegetical process with genre-sensitivity. A genre-sensitive exegetical process requires the interpreter to consider not only the textual components but also the contextual features of a poetic text at the semantic and pragmatic levels. Practical exegesis does not follow any exegetical process in a strict sequence. Nonetheless, for the practical guidelines for preaching a lament psalm, I propose a set of operational procedures of a holistic exegetical method.

Preliminary Study of the Text and Survey of the Contexts

The first task for preaching in general is to select a preaching text. Whatever approaches the interpreter takes in choosing a lament psalm for a preaching text, he must be careful not to distort the meaning of the text in accordance with various contextual or pastoral factors: faithful exegesis of the text is fundamental to biblical preaching.

In selecting a lament psalm, the interpreter must delimit the text into a preachable unit. Since a lament psalm itself is a self-contained unit (discourse unit), the

delimitation of a lament psalm for a preaching text is not a difficult task.[61] However, it is important that the interpreter should choose a whole lament psalm as a preaching unit. Unless an entire psalm as a unit is considered, the interpreter cannot interpret and thus preach the poetic text with genre-sensitivity. Indeed, genre is a "matrix" for the text including the function, content, form, and mood and it involves the entirety of a written communication through which the author intended to enact a specific communicational purpose and effect on the reader. Thus, genre-sensitivity should be initially considered in selecting and delimiting a preaching unit, and consistently maintained throughout the exegetical process. On the other hand, some lament psalms need to be read and interpreted together (e.g., Psalms 9 and 10, Psalms 42 and 43). In any case, it is essential for the interpreter as a preacher to establish a clear delimitation of the text for a preaching unit.

After delimiting the text, the interpreter must carefully read the text. Good interpretation proceeds from good observation. Whether reading a lament psalm in its original language, or comparing different translations of the text, the interpreter needs to identify in advance the interpretive difficulties he will face in the text. Often times, careful observation and analysis of those difficulties lead to proper translation and interpretation of the whole psalm. Thus, in reading the text, the interpreter needs preliminary grammatical and syntactical study of differently translated verses, phrases, or words to precede detailed analyses in the exegetical process.

Before analyzing a poetic text, it is also important for the interpreter to read

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[61]Ernst R. Wendland, "Discourse Analysis of Hebrew Poetry," in *Discourse Perspectives on Hebrew Poetry in the Scriptures*, ed. Ernest R. Wendland (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 7.

aloud, paying attention to the structure, style, and sound of the text.[62] Since a psalm is a lyrical song to be read or sung, reading it aloud in the original language helps the interpreter capture the full meaning and orality (the orally presented way) of the text. In particular, lament psalms are not only songs but also prayers to be expressed through our lips and meditated upon in our minds.

The interpreter needs a further preliminary study of the context of the text. In fact, one of the fundamental principles of good interpretation is to understand the text in its original historical context. Many psalms, however, seem to defy the best efforts to identify their exact historical location. Furthermore, the study of the titles of the psalms indicates that the original setting of any psalm seems not the same as the historical setting of that psalm in the canonical text.[63] Thus, a psalm provides various interpretive contexts such as historical, categorical, and literary contexts, and requires the interpreter to attend carefully to all.

Despite the difficulty in the various contextual studies, understanding as much as possible of the contexts of a selected lament psalm is essential to proper exegesis. Yet, since an overemphasis on a particular context without exact historical location and details is counterproductive in resolving the tension between a text-external and a text-internal

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[62]Lee, *Oral Reading of the Scriptures*, 143-44.

[63]For instance, although Pss 14 and 53 seem two different versions of the same original psalm, their titles are not identical. This difference implies that the titles are not original but added independently after the original composition. See Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 119-25; Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 214-15; and Tremper Longman III, "Lament," in *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genre of the Old Testament*, ed. D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese (Nashville: B&H, 1995), 208.

context, once various contexts have been surveyed,[64] the interpreter should begin a more text-oriented analytical approach to clarify the author's intended meaning and purpose.

Analyzing the Semantic Meaning and the Textual Organization

The survey of the text and its contexts should lead to a careful analysis of the semantic meaning and organization of the text. The purpose of analyzing the semantic meaning and organization is to understand what the author said through the text and how he said it. This procedure includes analysis and appreciation of the message, medium, and mood of the text in analyzing the semantic meaning and textual organization.

The medium-focused linear analysis. Structure is the primary element requiring the interpreter's scrutiny.[65] While examining the colon, lines, structural patterns, and arrangements, the interpreter must divide the text into main groups by strophic units.[66] In sketching a big picture of the text in strophic units, the interpreter must be attentive to formal and semantic markers that delineate the beginning and ending of each unit. The interpreter must also observe parallelistic structures and similar and contrasted contents of the entire psalm, as these can be crucial factors for grouping the main divisions.[67] In other words, while observing if there are recurring patterns or basic

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[64]Since the issue of context is also related to the pragmatic aspects of the text, more detailed contextual surveys and suggestions for a lament psalm will be provided in the following process, analyzing the pragmatic aspects of a lament psalm.

[65]Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 187.

[66]Determining the main divisions must be based upon both the analysis of their meanings and structural features because they are interdependent. However, this process can be a more medium-focused analysis in terms of the purpose for grouping a psalm into the main divisions.

[67]David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 173-74.

structural configurations such as symmetric, parallel, and linear in the entire psalm, the interpreter must also examine semantic similarity, logical progression, or meaningful connection in terms of content.[68] In short, a strophic group should hold groups of lines together structurally and thematically, while at the same time separating them from the surrounding lines. In addition, since the strophic shift in topic entails a shift of style, a change of imagery or figures of speech will be an important indicator for dividing strophes in an entire psalm.

In sketching a big picture of a lament psalm, the interpreter must move back and forth between the parts of the text and the whole, correcting or modifying his presuppositions—that is a hermeneutical circle. Yet, in this process, the interpreter should primarily attempt to see the structural/thematic patterning and characteristics of the entire text, rather than paying too much attention to the details of the text. By grasping the big picture, the interpreter can have a clear understanding of the psalm's structure, which helps him understand the overall message and flow of thought. This big picture will produce tentative strophic divisions that should lead to more detailed analysis in following steps of the process.

In almost all cases, in sketching a big picture of a lament psalm, the interpreter can divide the strophic units in a linear (sequential) pattern. Concerning the stereotypical linear pattern of lament psalms, many scholars agree that laments are comprised of similar structural/thematic units with various recurrent features such as invocation,

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[68]Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard states that to identify the structural pattern or units, the interrupter must also identify the poem's sense units because they are basic to the structure of a poem. Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 317.

petition, complaint, confession, imprecation, profession, and praise.[69] Rarely will all of these elements actually occur together in a lament psalm, and they are not associated with a lament in strict sequence. Identifying these compositional elements, however, assists the interpreter in sketching the big picture of a lament psalm.

The interpreter can utilize form-critical analysis to help identify the compositional elements of the lament psalms. Yet, since form-criticism exists for the purpose of classifying identifying commonalties rather than understanding the details of individual psalms,[70] the interpreter faces the danger of ignoring the uniqueness of a lament psalm through over-emphasis on form-critical methodology. He should remember that the author did not begin with choices of various form-critical components; form-critical components merely help the interpreter recognize the pattern of the psalm. Thus, in sketching the big picture of a lament psalm, the interpreter should not let the known typical features of the form dominate the way he analyzes the specific features of the passage.[71] Rather, once he draws a tentative big picture of the whole psalm, utilizing its typical features, he must try to analyze specific structural elements or ingredients of the

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[69]Gersternberger meticulously categorizes the structural components as follows: invocation, complaint, confession of sin or assertion of innocence, affirmation of confidence, plea or petition for help, imprecation against enemies, acknowledgment of divine response, vow or pledge, hymnic element, blessings, and anticipated thanksgivings. Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1 with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 12. For the various classifications of the structural/thematic patterns, see also Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 52-70; Mays, *Preaching and Teaching*, 3-29; Craig C. Broyles, *The Conflict of Faith and Experience in the Psalms: A Form-Critical and Theological Study*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, vol. 52 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 35-54; and Bernard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 77-96.

[70]S. E. Gillinghem, *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 218.

[71]Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 4th ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 120.

content to confirm or correct the tentative big picture.[72] In short, drawing one big rough sketch through a structural/thematic analysis of the whole is the first step for proper interpretation of a lament psalm.

The message-focused related analysis. Each provisional strophic division in the big picture should be analyzed in detail. The previous step, with its focus on the structural/thematic flow of the entire psalm and its strophic divisions according to structural/logical connections, is medium-focused; this step analyzes each individual strophic unit, focusing on how the author expresses thematic points in each unit and how they are thematically related. In this sense, this process is a more message-focused analysis.

There are three basic tasks in this process. First, the interpreter must concretize a thematic point or proposition in each unit. In doing so, he needs to examine the parallelistic relations or correspondence in the unit to see what kind of logical development exists in the unit. Second, the interpreter must examine the texture, that is, the psalmist's use of language in a strophic unit. Through the study of poetic words, key terms, and figures of speech, the interpreter needs to understand specifically how the psalmist expressed the thematic point. Third, the interpreter needs to discern the distinctive prominent points of the text, considering the unity and connectivity of the thematic points as a whole. The psalmist's distinctive use of recurrent patterns or literary devices is often stylistically or structurally marked for special thematic focus and/or emotive-affective emphasis.

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[72]For the detailed analysis of structural/functional elements of lament psalms, see Table A2 in Appendix 2.

As mentioned earlier, a lament psalm is made up of a list of elements which occur in a variety of arrangements. Consideration of these compositional (structural/thematic elements) elements helps the interpreter concretize the thematic point(s) of each strophic unit, examine the author's stylistic use of language in relation to the thematic points, and identify the distinctive points within the text.

In specific, in drawing the details of a lament psalm with its relational-structural themes, it is helpful for the interpreter to consider three thematic dimensions: toward the psalmist himself (I-lament or We-lament), toward God, and toward other people (enemies).[73]

First, while analyzing the strophic units related to the psalmist(s), the interpreter can discern whether a lament psalm is individual or communal by identifying who the psalmist is. In addition, the interpreter can grasp the motivation of the psalmist for composing the lament psalm by asking why he is experiencing trouble. The answers to this question can point towards self,[74] enemies, and/or God.

Second, the lines or units directed toward God often play an important role as the theological focal point of a lament psalm. The lament psalms, in essence, are prayers asking for help from God in time of distress. The apparent motivation is often the psalmist's life-circumstances, but the fundamental motivation is usually the psalmist's

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[73]Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 172-81. See also Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 57; James L. Mays, "Psalms and Prayer: Congregational Lectures on Prayer-Psalms as Lesson and Liturgy," in *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*, ed. Patrick D. Miller and Gene M. Tucker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 12-13.

[74]Particularly, certain lament psalms include of the common psalmic element of confession of sin—these laments are traditionally called penitential psalms (Pss 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142). In these penitential psalms, the psalmist' motivation and reason for composing the psalm is within himself. However, sin and sinfulness are statistically a minor theme in lament psalms.

faith in God's attributes and actions. In some cases, the psalmist clearly expresses that his very reason for lamenting is God.[75] Thus, by observing the nature of God who hears the psalmist's prayer, and noting what God does as expressed in the text, the interpreter can identify the psalmist's understanding of God, the relationship between the psalmist and God, and God's attributes or actions expressed in the text. For the interpreter, these theological factors play an important role in identifying the exegetical ideas in the exegetical process.

Third, "others" including enemies abound in the lament psalms. According to Westermman, "others," especially the enemy, represent the most elaborately developed component of the lament psalms.[76] In psalms of lament, the psalmist uses a variety of terms to describe the enemies who are causing this suffering.[77] Thus, analyzing the enemies' identities, natures, actions, and characteristics greatly helps the interpreter grasp the psalmist's problems. In particular, the interpreter will find that imprecations directed against the enemies comprise a large portion of laments; accordingly, these are often called imprecatory psalms.[78]

In summary, the interpreter must understand the relationship of these three dimensions—self, God, enemies—in order to concretize the thematic points of strophic

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[75]Broyles and Fløysvik call these psalms complaint psalms (Pss 6, 13, 22, 35, 39, 42-43, 88, and 102). See Broyles, *The Conflict of Faith*, 37-40; Ingvar Fløysvik, *When God Becomes My Enemy: The Theology of Complaint Psalms* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1997), 18-20.

[76]Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 169.

[77]Ibid., 183-94. According to Westermann, unlike the enemies in individual lament psalms who are generally personal enemies, the enemies in the communal laments are national and political ones and are sometimes specifically named; e.g., Edom (Pss 60 and 137), Assyria (Ps 83), Babylon (Ps 137), and other external enemies (Pss 74, 79, and 89).

[78]Although opinion varies as to the numbers and identity of the imprecatory psalms, at least several psalms (Pss 7, 35, 58, 59, 69, 83, 109, and 137) are generally identified as imprecatory psalms.

units and their relationships in a lament. The relationship of these three dimensions is not always clear, and recognition of them may not provide concrete answers as to the psalmist's situation, the identity of the enemies, and God's response. However, understanding how a lament is associated with these three dimensions expressed in the text provides the interpreter with an instructive framework for understanding the main theme and sub-points based upon the characters in the text. In addition, it is helpful to identify to which dimension a strophic unit belongs, to draw the detailed message of the text, and to confirm or correct the big picture of the text.

The mood-focused integrative analysis. Structural and thematic analysis is an essential tool for interpreting a psalm, because structure and content constitute a unity of a psalm. In addition to structure and content, however, the mood of the text should be analyzed and appreciated for total interpretation of a poetic passage.[79] Just as structure and content are interlocked in a psalm, the mood of a psalm is also interlocked with the progression of the content (message) and its structural and stylistic design (medium) throughout the poem.[80] Thus, a mood-focused approach helps the interpreter investigate the structural/thematic relationship between strophic divisions and verify the appropriateness of grouping of the divisions. At the same time, the interpreter can discern how the author imprinted the emotional dimensions in a psalm by coloring the solidity of the details of the text with its emotional overtones.

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[79]Meir Weiss, "Die Methode der 'Total-Interpretation'," SVT 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 92.

[80]Miller argues that there are three basic qualities of poetry: a particular content, a particular form, and a particular effect. The qualities of poetry and interpretation are not matters that should be dealt with separately; rather a deep sensitivity to the poetic characteristic features may aid the interpretive process and its results. See Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 29-30.

The analysis of emotional overtones is an especially crucial exegetical tool for understanding a lament psalm. In fact, the lament genre is primarily identified and defined by its content and mood.[81] In analyzing the mood, two specific steps are required: (1) considering the overall dynamic movements, and (2) identifying what experiences and emotions are depicted within the overall emotional movement.

First, the interpreter needs to consider the emotional movements within the text.[82] In a lament, the dominant emotional movement is from lament to praise with a sudden change of a mood, yet several other movements such as a reverse movement from praise to lament, the alternation between praise and lament, the return to lament after praise, and the absence of movement are also recognizable.[83] Analyzing how the emotional overtones change based upon the previous structural/thematic analyses helps the interpreter fully understand what the author intended to express in the meaning and emotions.[84]

Within the overall emotional movement, the interpreter needs to identify the specific experience and emotions expressed in the text. The interpreter needs to be careful in analyzing the emotions of the text, however, remembering that the subject of the

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[81]Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 26. See also Gillingham, *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*, 218.

[82]For better understanding of a psalm, Berlin advises that the interpreter pay attention, among other things, to the movement of a psalm. Adele Berlin, "Introduction to Hebrew Poetry," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 314.

[83]For example, a reverse emotional movement from praise to lament can be identified in Pss 27 and 40. In addition, Ps 31 and 35 show alternation between them. Ps 12 shows the return to lament after praise and Ps 88 shows no emotional movements. For the five patterns of emotional movements of lament psalms, see Table A3 in Appendix 3.

[84]For the information of recent approaches to the study of the change of mood, see Villanueva, *The 'Uncertainty of a Hearing'*, 1-24.

analysis is neither contextual conditions nor the psalmist's psychological conditions, but the shape and textures of emotions expressed by the author in the text. In other words, the primary concern of the emotional analysis of a lament psalm is to see the different ways in which the experiences of the psalmist are presented through the text, and to feel their textures and shape as it were. Thus, the interpreter should resist any attempt to determine the precise contextual factor for each emotional expression or to extract the psalmist's psychological condition in violation of textual expressions.

While identifying emotional movements, the interpreter can derive the message from the emotional expressions in relation to the three thematic dimensions (the self, others, and God).[85] In short, the purpose of these analyses is to identify the pathos of a lament psalm communicated by the author. Since the emotional dimension is a crucial factor in the lament genre, emotional analysis along with structural/thematic analysis will uncover the textual dynamics the author embedded.

In conclusion, analysis of the semantic meaning and organization of the text includes the analysis of genre-textual components—message, medium, and mood—and their interactions. This process will provide the interpreter an integrative understanding of the author's structural arrangement and stylistic language, his intended meaning, and his embedded mood in a lament psalm. In addition, careful attention to genre and textual components will open up additional dimensions of cognitive meaning and non-cognitive effects of the text.

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[85]Vilanueva, "Preaching Lament," 81.

Analyzing the Pragmatic Aspects (Communicational Purpose and Effect) of the Text

The previous analysis of semantic meaning and textual organization is primarily intended to understand the text's conceptual nature. To understand a text with genre-sensitivity, however, analysis of genre textual components should lead to another level of analysis in pursuit of its total communicative purpose and effect—genre-based contextual component. Treating a text with genre-sensitivity actually means understanding the text as a unified communicative act. Vanhoozer aptly states, "the most important thing we need to know about a text, I submit, is what kind of communicative act(s) it performs and with what content."[86] In other words, to understand a text with genre-sensitivity requires the interpreter to analyze not only what the text says and how it says it, but also the pragmatic or functional aspects of the text (why it says it).[87] Especially, although the psalm has an informative function and conveys profound theological truth,[88] the author's intended message in the poetic text is also manifested in equally significant connotative components such as personal emotions, moods, attitudes, and values. Thus, based upon previous analysis of the textual components and

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[86]Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *First Theology: God, Scripture & Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 179. See also idem, *Is There Meaning In This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 335-50.

[87]In terms of genre-sensitivity, it is important to understand the pragmatic or functional aspects of the text because the complex of genre interacts with its form, meaning, function in the poetic text. While calling the semantic meaning and pragmatic aspect of the text "focus" and "function," Long acknowledges the importance of the pragmatic aspects of the text. See Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 108-12.

[88]Osborne clearly states that "theology is central to biblical poetry." Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 186

identification of the semantic meaning and the organization of the poetic text,[89] the interpreter's exegetical process must analyze how the text functions in the communicational act.

There are two basic exegetical questions for identifying the pragmatic aspects of the text. First, what did the author intend to perform or achieve through the text. Answering this question identifies the so-called "performative" utterances such as warning, encouraging, rebuking, praising, or comforting. Second, how did he accomplish it? These questions, in fact, require the interpreter to consider the poetic text from the perspectives of rhetorical dynamics and pragmatics.[90]

Pragmatic or functional analysis of the text as intentional communication is an especially important exegetical step for the interpreter as a preacher to convey the textual dynamics into a sermon in order to produce a similar impact in a congregation inevitably living under very different situational, social, and spiritual circumstances. Thus, the following pragmatic analytical procedure will help the interpreter identify and communicate the text's total communicative purpose and effect intended by the author.

Suggesting the contexts for a wide communicational purpose. The analysis of the poetic text in terms of total communicational purpose and effect necessarily entails

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[89]For the importance of discovering the meaning of the text before conjecturing the purpose of the text, see Norman L. Geisler, "The Relation of Purpose and Meaning in Interpreting Scripture," in *Rightly Divided: Readings in Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996).

[90]Vanhoozer explains that genre as a more complex concept supervenes on the simpler objects such as parole and langue; to know them, the former requires disciplines of pragmatics such as speech act philosophy and discourse analysis, and latter requires linguistics, semiotics, and syntax. In other words, understanding and reading genre is not only a matter of identifying language games but also of participating in communicative practices. Thus, the interpreter needs communicative competence to treat the text as unified communicative acts. Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?*, 336-37.

reconsideration of context. The author's purposeful choice of the poetic genre is related to contextual factors as well as textual components. The author's context may be of primary concern here, and the contextual setting undoubtedly influenced how the original audience received it.

However, without historical references, the interpreter faces multiple possible contexts. Thus, he can only survey possible historical (canonical), categorical, and literary contexts based upon given clues in the titles and the text, and then suggest the context that may best fit the meaning expressed within the text.

First, despite the debated authenticity of the titles and the lack of the specific historical references in the text,[91] the text-faithful interpreter can try to pursue the author and historical context of an individual psalm through supplied titles and contents of the text.[92]A text-honoring intepreter should respect the canonical status of the historical information in the titles, in order to see what light they might shed on the general background and purpose of the chosen passage.[93] Thus, the best the interpreter can do in surveying the historical context of an individual text is to try to link the theoretical origin of the text with its actual use in the context given in the canonical text, and try to link and

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[91]Futato states that the historical information of the titles and the text does not play a major role in determining the meaning of the psalms due of the tension raised from the disharmony between the context of the text and its content. Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 119-21.

[92]In identifying the historical context, the traditional approach focused on Davidic connections based upon the congruity between titles and the contents of the text; the historical-critical approach, on the other hand, provides a variety of explanations about historical authors and contexts based upon the incongruity between them.

[93]Dillard and Longman also state that fixing the historical background of a psalm is useless. However, they also recognize the heuristic function of the titles, emphasizing their canonical statuses and historical uses. Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 214-15; Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 38-41.

balance between them.[94]

Second, surveying the categorical context of a particular lament psalm is important; recognition of the category through common literary conventions or forms guides the interpreter's expectation as to what can and cannot be found in a particular text.[95] Form critics have paid particular attention to categorical characteristics, focusing upon typical and shared features among the psalms.[96] Numerous form-critical studies of the lament psalms have provided helpful insights regarding their commonalities as well as the unique formal elements of a particular one. Recognizing a psalm as a lament clearly helps the interpreter determine a text's author-intended meaning and purpose in general. Identification of the lament's categorical context should lead to careful and detailed analysis of the text in pursuit of the authorial meaning and purpose.

Third, the interpreter needs to survey literary context. In canonical criticism, the analysis of literary context is a necessary step for interpreting and thus preaching the text as the final form of the book. While considering a psalm's particular location in surrounding psalms, the interpreter can explore the relation of particular psalms to their immediate literary contexts and the possible purposive or intentional ordering of the psalms.[97] Since a lament psalm is a human word to God, an individual lament does not

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[94]Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 14; and John Goldingay, *Psalms 1-41*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2006), 25-30. Goldingay contends that the interpreter must exercise a reasoned imagination in linking a psalm with historical reference.

[95]Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 144; Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 21-23.

[96]Emphasizing the cultic settings over literary settings, form-criticism in general understands that the commonality of a genre is formulated by the same life-setting. Thus, the categories and categorical contexts in form-criticism are not synchronic-oriented contexts, but historical functional categories.

[97]Gerald H. Wilson, "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," *Int* 46 (1992): 129-42. See also J. Clinton McCann Jr., *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, JSNTSup, ed. J. Clinton McCann Jr. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 7.

have a customary literary context. However, since the canonical text as God's Word to us has an instructive or theological purpose, the interpreter must study the literary context of a psalm. The survey of the literary context allows the interpreter to take a synchronic perspective of the book of psalms, moving him outside the passage's original historical context and outside its transmission through later historical uses.[98] However, since there is interpretive tension between historical contexts (the original context and historical uses) and literary context, the interpreter should not overemphasize the literary context in discovering the authorial intent of the text.[99]

Admittedly, it is not possible to be dogmatic or prescriptive in determining the context of a lament psalm by surveying its historical (canonical), categorical, and literary contexts. In fact, the uncertainties in these contextual studies are directly related to the transcendent and timeless quality that characterizes poetic genre and poetic language.[100] In particular, the typical characters—psalmist, God, and enemies—and the rich stereotypical and figurative language enable lament psalms to move toward different contemporary possibilities that resonate with the situation of the lament.[101] Thus, a lament psalm enables the interpreter to consider possible multiple contextual foci between the initial and contemporary settings; thus, the interpreter can easily apply the

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[98]Craig C. Broyles, "Traditions, Intertextuality, and Canon," in *Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis*, ed. Craig C. Broyles (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 171.

[99]For the contextual study of a psalm, Dillard and Longman argue that studying the categorical context is more helpful than studying the surrounding contexts. Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction of the Old Testament*, 215. Goldingay also states that traditional approach and categorical analysis for contextual studies is a more fruitful way of understanding the Psalms. Goldingay, *Psalms 1-41*, 37.

[100]Concerning the universality and timelessness of the poetic genre and poetic language, see Estes, *Handbook on the Wisdom*, 141. Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, WBC, vol. 19 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 36; Goldingay, *Psalms 1-41*, 24-25; and Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 122.

[101]Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 52.

text to contemporary situations.[102]

Despite the uncertainties involved, however, it is useful to make reasoned suggestions guided by the canonical or textual clues concerning the lament's communicative objectives, implications, and significances. All such pragmatic aspects of meaning were integral constituents of the message when it was first composed and then conveyed to its readers and audience. Thus, in suggesting plausible contexts guided by the superscriptions and textual clues, the interpreter may discern the broad compositional and communicational purposes of the text. The supposed situational contexts, whether explicitly stated in a superscription or implied in the content, can provide a possible communicational purpose of the text.[103]

However, suggesting plausible contexts for a lament cannot provide the interpreter a definite communicational purpose of the text. Thus, to clarify a communicational purpose of the text, the interpreter must pay attention to the text's literary genre, its formal and functional elements that provide clues to the psalmist's

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[102]In this sense, contextual features are subjects that should continue to be treated in identifying the meaning and purpose of the text and their applications throughout the theological and homiletical processes. Yet, contextual studies in the exegetical process are focused on identifying the purpose and meaning of a given text.

[103]For instance, the title of Ps 63 (Individual lament psalm) identifies it as a work of David when he was in the desert of Judah. The first verse of the psalm in which the author says he "thirsts" in a "dry and weary land where there is no water" (ESV) increases the credibility of the title. Thus, when respecting the heuristic function of this title, the interpreter can infer two possible specific historical circumstances during the entire life of David—David's flight from Saul or David's flight from Absalom's rebellion. However, in the text the author refers himself as a king (v. 11). With this clear textual clue, the interpreter may rule out all the occasions when David was in flight from Saul. Thus, the plausible specific historical context can be David's exile from his son, Absalom (2 Sam 15-17). This plausible life situation of a psalm can help the interpreter understand why the author composed the lament psalm with greater precision. Despite the heuristic function of the title, such background information is not critical to the usefulness of the text, because the human condition is so trans-historical and universally shared that in spite of historical or cultural differences, the distress and delight of an individual at any time and place can resonate with anyone else.

situation and the communicational purpose and effect within the text.[104] In short, while the interpreter should recognize the limits of contextualization, he should be honest with the limits of the biblical text, giving more attention to the text-honoring analytical approach in determining the author's intended meaning and purpose.

Discerning the communicational purpose and effect of the text. The contextual suggestions for identifying the communicational purpose of the text should be confirmed by analyzing how the author actualized the communication intention through the text, because the author inscribed in the text what he wanted to communicate. In other words, the genre-components of a poetic text need to be examined from a discourse perspective, examining not only the semantic meaning of the text but also the special effects and functional aspects of the text through its literary structures and devices. The poetic genre, by offering relatively typical types of communicative forms, facilitates interpersonal interaction.[105]

In other words, in analyzing the communicational purpose and effect of a lament psalm, based upon the previous analyses of the message, medium, and mood of the text, the interpreter should consider what functions the text or the parts of the text perform at the level of a communicational act. According to Long, the interpreter should

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[104]Ricoeur and Derrida argue against the importance of historical context by cutting off the author from the text first and the text from any fixed context. See Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 139; Jacques, Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. Chakrovoty (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 280-83. Vanhoozer, by contrast, correctly states that in terms of communicative practices, literary genres as historical formation have determinate social and historical context and provide a shared literary context, with typical elements shaped by historical context. Thus, understanding the literary genre and its components allows the interpreter to make an initial and plausible guess as to what kind of literary act has been performed in a possible original context. See Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?*, 337-39.

[105]Ibid., 338.

investigate what literary devices are employed to achieve its rhetorical dynamics.[106] In accordance with the previous analysis of semantic meaning and its organization, the interpreter needs to understand the texture as manifesting a particular function or functional complex. Thus, the interpreter needs to analyze how the original author accomplished his communicational purpose through the message designed by the medium and mood of the text.

In this regard, speech-act theory contributes significantly to understanding the biblical text, especially a poetic text by seeking the author's actualized communicational purpose and effect in the text.[107] As sociolinguists and others have pointed out in recent years, the linguistic form of any utterance conveys certain interpersonal illocutionary and perlocutionary functions in addition to its basic propositional substance.[108] The conceptual content of a poetic passage plays a partial role in determining the effectiveness of any communication event and the appropriateness of the structural and

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[106]Thomas G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 25-30. In this book, Long provides five questions that helps the preacher reflect literary and rhetorical dynamics of the text into the sermon. The five questions are as follows: (1) what is he genre of the text? (2) what is the rhetorical function of this genre? (3) what literary devices does this genre employ to achieve its rhetorical effect? (4) how in particular does the text under consideration, in its own literary setting, embody the characteristics and dynamics described in question 1-3? (5) how may the sermon, in a new setting, say and do what the text says and does in its setting? Among these five questions, questions 1-3 belong to the exegetical process in sermon preparation.

[107]For the productivity of speech-act theory in biblical interpretation, see Richard S. Briggs, *Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation-Toward a Hermeneutic Self-Involvement* (New York: T & T Clark, 2001), 293; Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 17-18; Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?*, 226-28; idem, *First Theology*, 164-65. Particularly, emphasizing communicative competence in understanding and reading genre, Vanhoozer elucidates that since literary acts have subject matter, a particular form, illocutionary force, and a perlocutionary trajectory, the interpreter needs to consider them to avoid "short-circuiting the process of interpretation." Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?*, 337.

[108]For understanding these terminologies of speech-act theory, see chap. 1. In fact, speech-act theory emphasizes the interpersonal nature of communication, affirming that "the author remains, in theory, connected to the text's communicative aims" and at the same time the texts functioned as vehicles for person-to-person communications. Brown, *Scripture as Communication*, 35.

stylistic forms in which the message is encoded.[109] To be sure, in an information-oriented text, the content is prominently in focus. In a poetic passage, however, the informative function of the text (locution) is not nearly so prominent, whereas the expressive and emotive functions increase—illocutionary force and perlocutionary intent (the author's intended hearer's or reader's response).[110]

In terms of speech act theory, the locutionary act is the author's expressed sentence; the illocutionary act is his intention of a sentence; and the perlocutionary act is what a sentence does (its effect on the reader). Accordingly, for understanding the psalmist's communicational intention by speech act analysis, the interpreter needs to have proper categories of illocutionary acts. In this regard, Searle provides self-explanatory and thus applicable terms for identifying the types of illocutionary acts. Searle states,

> We tell people how things are (Assertives), we try to get them to do things (Directives), we commit ourselves to doing things (Commissives), we express our feelings and attitudes (Expressives), and we bring about changes in the world through our utterances (Declarations).[111]

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[109]For instance, consider the first two verses from Ps 3: "O Lord, how many are my foes!/ Many are rising again me/ Many are saying of my soul/ There is no salvation for him in God" (ESV). The conceptual content of these verses is that the psalmist has many adversaries who doubt God's deliverance of him. However, obviously the informative function of these verses is not primary concern, because the psalmist is not aiming to inform God of his problems. His purpose was rather to complain of his own situations while simultaneously petitioning to God for resolving them.

[110]Particularly, while explaining that a specific instructional purpose adopts a different teaching strategy that leads the reader to respond in a different way, David G. Firth states that each psalm is a locution, but different teaching strategy represents a different illocutionary force, and that the perlocution will thus vary. He also asserts that speech act theory, with its emphasis on illocutionary force and perlocution, is a valuable aid to understanding the teaching intent of individual psalms. David G. Firth, "The Teaching of the Psalms," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006) 164. However, due to the lack of access to the original communicational event and the possibility of unintended responses from readers or hearers, the perlocutionary act (the hearer's or reader's response) plays only a minor role in the analysis of the psalm. Yet, the perlocutionary intent (the author-intended response) expressed in the text by the author should be analyzed.

[111]J. R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), viii.

Although these categories—assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, declarative are not completely independent, because speech acts usually overlap more than one at a time, analyzing a lament psalm with these categories significantly helps the interpreter understand the psalmist's intention, communicational purpose, and effect.[112] Thus, to understand the communicational purpose and effect of a poetic text in a genre-sensitive manner, the interpreter should consider the author's locution, illocutionary force, and perlocutionary intent.

In fact, the lament psalms are one of the most distinctive biblical sub-genres that show the illocutionary function and perlocutionary intention within the text through

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[112]For instance, speech act analysis (illocutionary force//possible effects) of Ps 13 will be denoted as follows:

1. How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? (assertive) + EXPRESSIVE // Sympathy
   How long will you hid your face from me? (assertive) + EXPRESSIVE // Sympathy

2. How long must I take counsel in my soul (assertive) + EXPRESSIVE // Sympathy
   and have sorrow in my heart all the day? (assertive) + EXPRESSIVE // Sympathy
   How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? (assertive) + EXPRESSIVE // Sympathy

3. Consider and answer me, O Lord, my God; (directive) + EXPRESSIVE // Sympathy
   light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, (assertive) + EXPRESSIVE // Sympathy

4. Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," (assertive) + EXPRESSIVE // Sympathy
   lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. (assertive) + EXPRESSIVE // Sympathy

5. But I have trusted in your steadfast love. ASSERTIVE+DECLARATIVE + EXPRESSIV //Convince
   my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. COMMISIVE + EXPRESSIVE // Praise

6. I will sing to the Lord, COMMISSIVE + EXPRESSIVE // Praise
   because he has dealt bountifully with me ASSERTIVE + EXPRESSIVE // Convince

This speech act analysis elucidates that expressive play the largest role in determining the nature of Ps 13. However, vv. 1-4 are overtly expressive contain assertive or directive, offering a proposition as well as expression of complaint and petition. Their effect can include evoking sympathy from the reader. In verse 5, the Psalmist affirms his confession (assertive), directly conferring a special nature upon God (declarative) and he manifests his confidence (commissive), promising his rejoice over God's salvation (expressive). This verse can have an effect of convincing the readers and of eliciting praise from them by implicitly inviting them to join the praise. Verse 6 has the similar types as v. 5. Based upon the above speech act analysis, the interpretive can infer that a single speech act as the organizing principle is to evoke sympathy and praise from the reader by affirming or convincing God's steadfast love and salvation.

the medium and mood of the text. In this sense, form-critical analysis of lament psalms is close to an intentional discourse-oriented methodology, endeavoring to define and describe its genre in terms of its form, meaning, function and context (life-setting). Thus, although the interpreter cannot fully agree with the form-critical formal and functional analysis of lament psalms (invocation-petition-complaint-confession-profession-imprecation-praise), these analyses provide insights which help to analyze the functional and illocutionary forces of a text. The functional and illocutionary elements of a poetic text are typified on the basis of the specific manner in which the sequence of these elements is manifested within it, that is, with regard to not only content, form, and mood, but also function. Thus, the interpreter can analyze the communicational purpose and effect of the text by considering what kinds of formal and functional elements are expressed in the text and how these elements are designed and arranged. Obviously, not all lament psalms contain all of these formal and functional elements; instead, most omit some elements and mix the others in various ways.

In summary, based upon the previous analysis of the semantic meaning of a text and its organization, the analysis of pragmatic aspects of a lament psalm intends to analyze and appreciate the text as the original author's intended communication by suggesting the contextual factors and analyzing the locutionary content of the text, the illocutionary forces of the text, and the perloutionary intent within the text with its compositional elements. Through pragmatic analysis of the text from rhetorical and discourse perspectives, the interpreter can understand the text as a communicational act more completely. When the interpreter can understand the full spectrum of meaning of the text that includes its locution, illocutionary forces, and perlocutionary intent, while

understanding the textual organization within the overall unity of the text as a communicational act, he can confidently determine the communicational meaning and purpose of the text, appreciating the rhetorical and communicational dynamics of the text embedded by the original author.[113]

Establishing Genre-Sensitive Exegetical Findings

The purpose of this exegetical process is to help the interpreter as a preacher engage with a lament psalm holistically and identify the textual dynamics, which ultimately leads to holistic preaching. Since the holistic exegetical products can be the foundational elements in the theological and homiletical process of preaching the lament psalms, the interpreter should clearly establish the holistic exegetical products based upon the previous semantic and pragmatic analyses of the text.

When following the above procedure, the interpreter can derive two basic exegetical products: what the text said (the semantic meaning) and what the text did (the communicational purpose), that is, the meaning and purpose of the text. The interpreter as preacher thus must articulate the semantic meaning of the text the psalmist intended to communicate and clearly express the main idea and sub-ideas of the text and the communicational purpose of the text into propositional sentences and objectival phrases.

However, this holistic genre-sensitive exegetical method should not stop at understanding and expressing the meaning and purpose of the text; it should also reveal how they are accomplished at the level of communicational act by the textual organizations and functional elements (illocutionary forces and perlouctionary intent).

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[113]Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?*, 341-42.

Thus, while concretizing the meaning and purpose of the text, the interpreter must grasp not only the message but also how the medium and mood (the textual organizations) interact for that meaning and purpose from the communicational perspective. In fact, since the meaning and purpose of a poetic text can be similar to those of a text in a different biblical genre, a proper genre-sensitive exegetical process for a lament psalm inevitably requires that the interpreter clearly understand a lament's unique textual organization (the message, medium, and mood) and functional elements as a holistic exegetical product.

In particular, the medium and mood of the text, which are interlocking with the message of the text, play an essential role not only as formal and emotional elements for the textual semantic meaning, but also as functional elements with various sequences for its communicational purpose. Consequently, a proper genre-sensitive exegetical process for a lament psalm should produce two basic exegetical products (the meaning and purpose of the text) and show how they are actualized by the textual organization and functional elements with the interactions with the message, medium, and mood of the text.[114] In fact, clear understanding of a lament's textual organization or design as a holistic exegetical product—how the message, medium, and mood of the text work—helps the interpreter as preacher grasp the textual dynamics, which should influence his subsequent sermon-making processes. In establishing the textual organization that links the meaning and the purpose of the text, the interpreter may express the textual dynamics

[114]As Long states, the meaning statement and the purpose statement as exegetical products should match. However, he does not state how they should match. I propose that for genre-sensitive preaching of lament psalms, the interpreter as preacher must consider how the textual organization as formal and functional elements match and unify those statements. Cf. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms*, 47; idem, *The Witness of Preaching*, 108-16.

realized by the medium and the mood of the text in a set of statements or outlines, yet it would be possible to use pictorial diagrams or arches to express the structural organization and the movements of the mood of the text.

In conclusion, a genre-honoring exegetical process for a lament psalm requires the interpreter as preacher to be always attentive to its genre-components throughout the exegetical process—a holistic exegetical process. This holistic process will produce textual organization (the medium and mood of the text) as well as significant exegetical details and two well-known essential exegetical products—the meaning and purpose of the text.

CHAPTER 3

A GENRE-SENSITIVE THEOLOGICAL PROCESS FOR PREACHING A LAMENT PSALM

Introduction

The primary purpose of this chapter is to establish a genre-sensitive theological process for preaching a lament psalm. The chapter begins with the necessity of genre considerations in the theological process in order to communicate the author's intended meaning and impact to the contemporary audience.[1] This section proposes that the interpreter as a preacher needs to investigate genre characteristics when developing a timeless theological/doctrinal truth in the theological process, because genre-based textual components (the message, medium, and mood of the text) are holistically interlocked with timeless theological/doctrinal propositions. In addition, investigation into a distinct genre characteristic of a lament psalm provides the interpreter with a significant timeless theological implication and communicational impact that should be uncovered and reflected in sermon preparation.

This chapter also delineates a step-by-step holistic theological procedure for preaching a lament psalm, considering the genre-based textual components (the message, medium, and mood of the text) from theological and communicational perspectives. The

[1]In this chapter, I borrow Timothy Warren's term, "theological process," which is more related to the notion of principlization than theological argumentation. For the necessity and detailed process of the theological process in sermon-making process, see Timothy S. Warren, "A Paradigm for Preaching," *BSac* 148 (1991): 463-86, and idem, "The Theological Process in Sermon Preparation," *BSac* 156 (1999): 336-

process follows four steps—developing theological/doctrinal big idea(s), discerning genre characteristics and their timeless theological implications and communicational impact, organizing the theological/doctrinal ideas with the timeless theological implications and communicational impact of genre characteristics, and establishing genre-sensitive theological findings.

The Necessity of a Holistic Theological Method for Lament Psalms

The Necessity of Genre Consideration in the Theological Process

Biblical hermeneutics enables an expositor to discover both authorial intent and the relevance of the text to the contemporary audience. [2] One of the prominent characteristics of sound hermeneutics is a concrete connection between the ancient text and the contemporary audience. To establish a proper connection, the interpreter should discover the kinds of theological truths the text contains and discern whether and how those theological truths can be transferred to the contemporary audience, because theology in essence is "the hermeneutical arch that reaches from the text to the contemporary sermon."[3] This task necessitates a sound theological process through which an interpreter as a preacher can develop a timeless and relevant theological truth that can build a bridge between the ancient text and the contemporary audience.

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[2]Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 5. Osborne argues that hermeneutics is the overall term that encompasses the task of exegesis (what it meant) and that of "contextualization" (what it means). See also Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 7; Duncan S. Ferguson, *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986), 6; and W. Randolph Tate, *Interpreting the Bible: A Handbook of Terms and Methods* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 163.

Timothy Warren's model of theological process. Among many homileticians who agree with the necessity of the theological or principlizing process for sermon preparation,[4] Timothy Warren, in particular, underscores the theological process for sermon preparation and thus elaborates it. While insisting that biblical preaching needs three crucial preparatory steps—the exegetical, theological, and homiletical processes,[5] Warren specifies the relationship between exegetical and theological processes from a homiletical perspective and highlights the importance of the theological process for connecting the ancient text with the modern world.[6] Concerning the goal of this theological process, Warren states,

> The goal of the theological process is to bridge the gap between the world of the ancient text (through the exegetical process) and the world of the immediate listeners (through the homiletical process) with a universally applicable statement of truth. This bridging task enables the preacher to interpret both the text in its ancient contextual world and the listeners in their immediate contextual world without fusing or merging the horizons of those two distinct worlds into an existential, novel, and therefore non-authoritative interpretation.[7]

In order to attain this goal, Warren proposes that a sound theological process should have three modifying stages from the exegetical process toward the homiletical process—stylizing, theologizing, and organizing. In the stylizing stage, he argues that the preacher

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[3]John Warwick Montgomery, "The Theologian's Craft," *CTM*, 37 (1966): 79.

[4]For the study of the theological or principlizing process, see Richard Ramesh, *Preparing Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 160; Ernest Best, *From Text to Sermon: Responsible Use of the New Testament in Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1978), 86; Henry A. Virkler and Karelynne Gerber Ayayo, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 200-07; Robert H. Stein, *Playing by the Rules: A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker), 26-27; and Walter C. Kaiser Jr. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker 1981), 198.

[5]Warren, "A Paradigm for Preaching," 463-86.

[6]Warren, "The Theological Process," 336-56.

[7]Ibid., 337.

should modify technical and specific terms of exegetical outlines and statements into general and theological expressions. In the theologizing stage, which Warren calls the heart of the theological process, he insists that the preacher advance three theological movements—biblical, canonical, and systematic in order to articulate and validate a timeless theological principle. In the organizing stage, he notes that the preacher should modify the exegetical outline and proposition into the theological outline and proposition in logical order. Warren concludes that when following these modifying stages of the theological process, the preacher can express the theological proposition of the text as a principlized statement for bridging the ancient text and the contemporary audience without misrepresenting and misapplying the divine intent of the text.

The broader goal of the theological process. The goal of Warren's model of the theological process is to bridge the gap between the ancient and contemporary worlds with a timeless theological proposition.[8] This kind of theological process provides a contact point for correlating the biblical and contemporary worlds by discovering and articulating in a text a relevant theological principle. However, the primary area of this model of the theological process can be limited to the formation of theological content (a theological proposition) and thus the whole theological process focuses on how to develop universal and timeless theological propositions on the conceptual level that are both rooted in the ancient text and applicable to the contemporary audience.

With regard to this goal, one may raise a question—can formulating a

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[8]While commenting that "to 'principlize' is to state the author's propositions, arguments, narrations, and illustrations in timeless abiding truths with special focus on the application of those truths to the current needs of the Church," Walter Kaiser equates this theological process with principlizing process. See Kaiser, *Toward An Exegetical Theology*, 152.

theological proposition on the conceptual or intellectual level from the text sufficiently cover the relevance of biblical communication between the ancient text and the contemporary audience? If the theological or principlizing process is another name for the hermeneutical examination that grasps and discloses the relevance of the ancient text to the contemporary audience, it is a legitimate question for the interpreter as a preacher to ask whether there is relevance of biblical communication to the contemporary world beyond the conceptual level. In particular, this question is more pertinent for preaching a lament psalm that is full of emotional elements and effects. In fact, if articulating a theological proposition on the conceptual level occupies the entire purpose of the theological process for preaching a lament psalm, the interpreter as a preacher may lose part of relevance of the text on the emotional level, which is also closely related to the psalmist's communicational purpose and effects.

Unfortunately, in current theories of the sermon-making process, the interpreter's primary area of study in the theological or principlizing process mainly focuses on formulating a timeless theological idea on the conceptual level in consideration of the historical, cultural, linguistic gaps between the ancient text and our modern world.[9] In other words, the goal of the theological process in sermon preparation is often reduced to a merely intellectual level, neglecting the total communicational dimension of the text and thus jettisoning its genre characteristics, which are expressed not only with the textual content but also with textual organization (the form and mood)

[9]Despite the recognition of the fact that the theological message as a principlized statement should not be dry and abstract, many theological processes in sermon preparation in reality remain to articulate a theological truth in a propositional way on a conceptual level. See Warren, "A Paradigm for Preaching," 476-78; idem, "The Theological Process," 336-56; and Keith Willhite, *Preaching with Relevance: Without Dumbing Down* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 63.

and dynamic (the purpose and impact). Thus, a careful interpreter as a preacher must not only examine what the author intended to communicate through the text, but also how he intended to communicate within a text, with the goal of understanding the total communication of the text. In this vein, a text-faithful preacher needs to consider not only the biblical author's intended meaning but also his own communicational method and impact, the textual organization and dynamics in the theological process.

In line with this view, Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard aptly argue for a broader purpose of hermeneutics by stating,

> We insist that the goal of hermeneutics must include detecting how the Scriptures can impact readers today. This means that true interpretation of the Bible can never be merely an exercise in ancient history. We can't really understand what a text meant without sensing something of its impact on our lives. Indeed, to truly understand what a text meant to its original recipients requires that we apprehend something of that original impact ourselves.[10]

If a text-faithful preacher implants this broader purpose of hermeneutics into his sermon preparation, he must consider the text's original meaning, as well as how to connect the text's "original impact" to the contemporary audience. This hermeneutical purpose may furnish a sound rationale for the interpreter as a preacher not to neglect genre consideration in the theological process, because genre and its characteristics are closely related to the manner of connecting the ancient text with the contemporary audience.

Particular yet timeless communicational value of genre. One of the primary communicative choices that a biblical writer makes is his choice of a genre for the sake of

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[10]William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 19.

effective communication.[11] Not only did the biblical author write with an intended meaning, but he also intentionally employed a particular communicational means for his listeners for a specific communicational purpose and impact. Such genre choice has much to do with how the biblical author communicates, because different genres communicate in distinct ways. In other words, biblical authors were aware of the communicational value of genre best suited to deliver their intended impact as well as meaning. In this regard, Kevin Vanhoozer argues,

> A text, then, is communicative action fixed by writing. Communicative "matter" (propositional content) and "energy" (illocutionary force) are inscribed. Moreover, texts also have a certain momentum; the communicative act generated by the author continues to have force wherever it is interpreted. Genuine interpretation conserves textual matter and energy.[12]

Consequently, the content and action of a text for communication are important elements. In this respect, contemporary interpreters as preachers should not overlook communication methods that the biblical authors employed but should carefully study the biblical authors' intended communicative approach and how to respect it in sermon preparation.[13]

As observed in the previous chapter, genre analysis is a crucial factor for discerning the author's intended meaning and effect in the exegetical process.[14]

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[11]Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 140. See also Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in this Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 337.

[12]In evaluating Speech-act theory, Vanhoozer stresses the role of the author in the communication action and its effects, not merely in the communication of authorial intent: "A text is an extension of one's self into the world, through communicative action." Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?*, 229.

[13]Ibid., 250.

[14]Concerning the importance of genre-consideration, see Elliott E. Johnson, *Expository Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 137-54; E. D. Hirsch Jr., *Validity in*

Furthermore, it also enables him to reflect the unique genre characteristics of his chosen text into the sermon in the homiletical process, while determining and developing homiletical components for effective communication.[15] However, the rules or functions of genre are typically minimized or completely neglected in consideration of the theological process in sermon preparation.[16]

Admittedly, genre is a communicative practice in a certain historical, cultural, and linguistic circumstance. Thus, there are unavoidable gaps in the form of chronological, cultural, and linguistic distance between the original audience and contemporary audiences. As the Scripture contains human communicational elements influenced by their historical context, a biblical author's communicational strategies cannot be free from the influences of the surrounding contexts when the Scripture was initially fashioned. In this sense, a genre is a particular communicational practice in a certain context. Consequently, the interpreter as a preacher must understand the biblical author's communicational strategies in the context of the historical composition of the text in the exegetical process. And then, in the theological process, the preacher must

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Interpretation (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 68-126; Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical theology*, 95; and Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 151.

[15]For the general guidelines for honoring genre characteristics in the homiletical process, see Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*; Thomas G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989); Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988); and Mike Graves, *The Sermon as Symphony: Preaching the Literary Forms of the New Testament* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1997); and Jerry D. Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety: How to Re-create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007). Arthurs provides more specific homiletical suggestions for reflecting the distinctive literary features of each biblical genre into the sermon, yet his treatment does not provide a solid theoretical ground for reflecting such genre-specific unique features into the sermon.

[16]Greidanus proposes "to study carefully the form of the text and how it, in its literary context, plays its part in carrying the message to its intended effect with the hearers." Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, 19. However, in his book, he does not sufficiently elucidate the peculiarities and effects of each genre in the construction of sermons.

measure gaps in communicational strategies between the original and contemporary audiences that are created by chronological, cultural, and linguistic distances. In fact, these intervals not only hinder the communication of the author-intended meaning in the text but also obstruct the delivery of the author's intended communicational effect for the contemporary audience either directly or indirectly.

While recognizing this particularity of a genre, the preacher, however, should not neglect the fact that genre is also a valuable communicational channel that correlates the author, the text, and the reader, regardless of time and space.[17] In terms of communicational value, genre, as an inherent entity of all literary practice, communicates in a particular way within a particular context, yet also has a trans-cultural and universal communicational dimension, working mostly at the experiential or artistic level.[18] Due to this particular yet timeless communicational value of genre, the contemporary interpreter can know what to expect from the text and put those expectations into play in the reading or hearing process. Concerning this particular yet transcendental communicational value of genre, Osborne recognizes the influential relationship between genre and the contemporary reader by stating,

> Genre functions as a valuable link between the text and the reader. As readers study a particular text, their expectations are increasingly defined as they narrow the possibilities to identify the proper genre to which the text belongs. The process proceeds by trial and error, as the text progressively revises the reader's identification. By applying to the text the potential extrinsic genre-type (those imposed on the text from outside), the interpreter eventually determines the intrinsic, originally intended genre and thereby is able to utilizes the correct "rules"

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[17]Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?*, 339.

[18]See Ronald B. Allen, "A Response to Genre-Criticism--Sensus Literalis," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids:Zondervan, 1984), 198.

for understanding the text.[19]

Ryken also notes the overall influence of genre on the hermeneutical process by stating, "Literary genre is nothing less than a norm or expectation to guide the reader in his encounter with the text. An awareness of genre will program our reading of a work, giving it a familiar shape and arranging the details into an identifiable pattern."[20] Johnson further explains,

> Biblical genre has a normative intent shared to some extent by great literature, in which the occasional and situational intention of private communication is absent. The intent includes normative implications because of the conventions shared in design and content of the textual expressions . . . these conventions are assumed aspects of composition that must be shared by the author and the audience in order for communication to be completed.[21]

Drawing upon these explanations about genre, we can conclude that a genre as a particular yet timeless communicative method facilitates interpersonal interaction in a certain way, regardless of time and space, by offering the conventional and repeatable literary features.

This particular yet timeless nature of genre necessarily requires the interpreter to reconsider the genre-contextual components (the context and function) in the theological process. In fact, whereas the exegetical process requires an interpreter to analyze the text in the original context in order to find the exegetical meaning (the message), organization (the medium and mood), and purpose of the text, the theological process requires him to understand these exegetical findings in the transcending context. To understand the text in the transcending context is necessarily associated with

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[19]Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 150.

[20]Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 25.

discovering the transcendent purpose.[22] However, in order to preach the text with genre-sensitive manner, the preacher should not neglect the notion that since genres are basically typified, purposeful, and dynamic responses to recurring situations,[23] the preacher should treat the text in the transcendent yet corresponding context and establish the corresponding purpose.

While recognizing this particularity and universality of genre characteristics in the theological or principlizing process, the preacher should also remember the inter-relational nature of genre essentials (the content, form, mood of the text). Consequently, the preacher must not only analyze the intellectual content but also the distinguishing structural and stylistic features (the textual organization) in order to filter the particularity and preserve the universality of genre in the theological or principlizing process.

Concerning the interrelatedness of genre-based textual essentials, when filtering the particularity and preserving the universality of genre, the preacher must understand genre and its characteristics as an integrated conceptual and communicational 'matrix' or 'map.' While emphasizing the importance of genre in communicating textual meaning and impact, Vanhoozer recognizes that a particular genre describes its own characteristic illocutionary forces for a meaningful communicational purpose.[24] While arguing that genre is a way of engaging with others and reality through words,[25]

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[21]Johnson, *Expository Hermeneutics*, 255.

[22]Warren, "A Paradigm for Preaching," 482-83.

[23]Carolyn R. Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *QJS*, no. 70 (1984): 159.

[24]Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?*, 341.

[25]Ibid., 344. Vanhoozer concludes that "the concept of genre coordinate three related aspects of communicative action: the enactment of the author's intent, the engagement of words with the world, and

Vanhoozer defines genre as a mode of communicational strategy with a particular illocutionary force, through which the author shares with others. At the same time, a genre is a mode of cognitive strategy in which the author describes a way of thinking and experiencing the world projected through words.[26] If Vanhoozer's explanation of genre gets close to its nature and function, we can conclude that genres beckon the reader not only to understand but also respond to the world projected by the text as recommended by the author. Hence, each genre engages the reader with a particular way of saying and doing something as the author projects through the text. That is, each genre offers the readers a way of understanding and experiencing the world of the text, putting forth a literary or linguistic 'matrix' or 'map' of how they ought to respond.

In this vein, for the interpreter, understanding a particular genre and its characteristics is to learn a particular conceptual and communicational 'matrix' or 'map' for engaging with reality and others through not only propositional contents but also illocutionary forces, which are both conveyed by distinctive literary and communicational characteristics (the medium and mood of the text).[27] In this way, the perspective of the world framed by a genre enables the text to transcend the particularities of the circumstances of its inscription, aiding readers, even if located at a distance in time and space from the author, to comprehend and experience the text and relate it to their own specific situations.

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the encounter through words with the addresses."

[26]Ibid., 342-43. In this sense, adopting Bakhtin's terminology, Vanhoozer describes genre as "form-shaping ideology." Concerning the intrinsic text-forming function of genres, see also Gray Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of Prosaics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 283.

[27]Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning?,* 343.

With this recognition of genre as a timeless conceptual and communicational 'matrix' or 'map' for the biblical author's intended effective communication, the preacher's theological or principlizing process should not be separated from his consideration of genre characteristics, which are actualized in the textual organization (the form and mood of the text) by the author. By discerning both the timeless theological message of the text and timeless conceptual or communicational 'matrix' or 'map,' the preacher can honor the relevance of biblical communication at its total communicational dimension. Furthermore, having this solid theological and communicational ground for honoring the timeless textual organization and features, the preacher, in the homiletical process, can determine and develop homiletical components (e.g. the sermonic purpose, content, form, and mood) in a more genre-sensitive and text-driven way.

Genre consideration for preaching of the lament psalms. Limiting the theological process to merely eliciting a theological proposition from the intellectual content of the text can result in the neglect of unique conceptual (theological) and communicational dimensions of that genre. The danger holds for all biblical genres, but is particularly acute in preaching a lament psalm. A consideration of the lament genre and its genre characteristics can enable the interpreter as a preacher to grasp both the theological substance of the text as communicated through the text, and the way the theological substance is communicated—the theological and communicational uniqueness of the text.

To be specific, the subject and substance of theology in a lament psalm is a

prayer from humanity to God.[28] In addition, this theological subject and substance is communicated primarily through human emotional and experiential expressions to God. This interactive nature of a lament psalm as communication between humanity and God cannot be fully grasped in a single propositional statement. In fact, the dialogical nature of the lament psalms between humans and God is inherently reflected not only in the content of the text but also in the literary dynamics, utilizing the interlocking nature of genre components. In this sense, the textual organization (the medium and mood of the text), consisting partly of the author's textual design for attaining his communicational purpose, necessarily entails its theological and communicational implication and impact. Besides articulating a theological message of a lament psalm (the message of the text), an examination of the interrelationship among those components (the message, medium, and mood of the text) of genre consideration seems a necessary and inherent task for a genre-sensitive theological process.[29]

Furthermore, no abstract theology exists in the Bible. As Longman aptly states, "Theology should be the expression of a person's heart and should always be applied to life situations."[30] A theological truth necessarily involves its significances in life

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[28]C. C. Broyles, "Lament, Psalms of," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 398. See also Claus Westermann, "The Role of the Lament in the Theology of the Old Testament," *Int* 28 (1974): 22, and Walter Brueggman, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocate* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 471; idem, "Psalms as Prayer," in *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1995), 33-66; and Patrick D. Miller, "Heaven's Prisoners: the Lament as Christian Prayer," in *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square*, ed. Sally D. Brown and Patrick D. Miller (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 15-26.

[29]Broyles, "Laments, Psalms of," 394. Broyles argues, "To unpack the spirituality and theology of lament psalms, we should respect not only the content but also their form and function—that is their genre. In this way, rather than selecting what features seem interesting and helpful from our perspective, we should remain truer to emphasis and priorities of the lament psalms themselves."

[30]Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988),

situations. The book of psalms is no exception. As a matter of fact, it is "the most vibrant form" that represents this dimension of theological truth. With the unique dual quality—human words to God and God's Word to humanity[31]—the lament psalms particularly communicate the tension between theology and life from the psalmists' perspectives. In each lament psalm, the lamenter expresses his theological understandings of God in times of troubles in a unique communicational way.

In summary, by focusing on the timeless and transcultural function of genre and the inter-relational nature of genre-textual essentials, the interpreter needs to examine the biblical author's conceptual and communicational strategy (genre characteristics) embedded in the text, and thereby honor the biblical author's intended theological meaning and communicational impact. The theological process for preaching a lament psalm should not be limited to mere expression of a theological proposition (the message of the text), but should be extended to include examination of other genre-textual components (the medium and mood of the text). When examining both the theological message of the text and the textual organization (the medium and mood of the text), the interpreter can have better understanding of the unique theological and communicational nature of the lament psalms. Furthermore, once he uncovers the distinguishing theological and communicational value of an individual lament psalm, the interpreter can faithfully reflect them into the sermon-making process. Ultimately, this genre-sensitive theological process can undergird a more text-faithful theological process, because it can

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[31]Howard N. Wallace, *Words to God, Word from God: The Psalms in the Prayer and Preaching of the Church* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 14-18.

guide the preacher not only to uncover a timeless theological truth from the text, but also respect the unique theological and communicational nature of a lament psalm.

Developing the Theological Focus: Theological/Doctrinal Propositions

In his *Reflections on the Psalms*, C. S. Lewis writes,

> What must be said, however, is that the Psalms are poems, and poems are intended to be sung; not doctrinal treatises, nor even sermons. . . . Most emphatically the Psalms must be read as poems; as lyrics, with all the licenses and all the formalities, the hyperboles, the emotional rather than logical connections, which are proper to lyric poetry.[32]

In this statement, Lewis surely has a point. When he calls attention to reading the Psalms as poems, he stresses that the book of the Psalms has different rules of genre at work, which necessitate reading the Psalms in a genre-sensitive manner. However, it might be tempting to understand such a statement as implying that the book of Psalms is a purely aesthetic object, being devoid of theological and doctrinal value.

Biblical poetry is primarily concerned with the communication of truth.[33] Church history shows that the book of Psalms has been highly regarded for its theological and doctrinal values among theologians and preachers.[34] Contemporary scholars also

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[32]C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (Port Washington, PA: Harvest, 1964), 2-3.

[33]Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 229-30. See also Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 237.

[34]Concerning the theological value of the book of Psalms, Augustine delved into Christology through his largest works on the Psalms, *Enarrationes in Psalmos.* Vernon J. Bourke, "Augustine on the Psalms," in *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, ed. Frederick Van Fleteren and Joseph C. Schnaubelt (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 55. Athanasius called the Psalms "an epitome of the whole scriptures." Basil, the bishop of Caesarea, gave the book of Psalms epithets such as "a compendium of all theology," and Luther called the Psalms "a little Bible, and the summary of the Old Testament," quoted by James Anderson, "Introduction," in *Joshua; Psalms 1-35*, *Calvin's Commentaries* vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), vii.

recognize the theological and doctrinal richness of the Psalms.[35] From the historical view of psalmic interpretation, recent canonical approaches attempt to overcome the limitations of form-criticism and to renew the traditional approach to the Psalms by refocusing on the content and theological themes in the canonical shape of the Psalms.[36] In this respect, lament psalms are no exception. Although lament psalms are not in the form of doctrinal treatises or sermons, no one negates the existence and centrality of their theological and doctrinal contents.[37] Consequently, a preacher's primary task in the

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While focusing on the knowledge of God and of man, Calvin's commentary on the Psalms is "a practical elaboration of his *Institutes*." Herman J. Selderhuis, *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 38. Among the preachers, Spurgeon's most significant work on the book of Psalms, *The Treasury of David*, is filled with doctrinal truths derived from each psalm. Jonathan Edwards also notes, "Here [in the book of Psalms] are such exalted expressions of the Gloriousness of God, and even of the Excellency of Christ and His kingdom. There is so much of the gospel doctrine, grace, and spirit, breaking out and shining in it." Jonathan Edwards, "God's Excellencies," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 10 *Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723.* ed. Wilson H. Kimnach (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 415.

[35]Longman states that the Psalms are a microcosm or summary of the rest of the Old Testament. McCann asserts that "the Psalter is not merely a collection of liturgical resources but is to be read and heard as a source of instruction and thus "the purpose of the Psalms is to teach, to instruct about the nature of God and man, about relating to God, about theology." Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 52. Dumbrell also notes, "The Book of Psalms is a compendium of biblical theology, and issues touching every aspect of Old Testaments thought and life are taken up within it." William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 211. In a similar way, Kraus characterizes the content of the Psalms as "a biblical theology in miniature."Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, trans. Keith Crim (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 12. See also J. Clinton McCann Jr., *A Theological Introduction to the Book of the Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 18-19.

[36]Among these studies, Wilson proposed that a celebration of Yahweh's kingship is the single message of the Psalms. Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985), 6; Brueggemann argues that two major theological ingredients in the Psalter are obedience and praise as the perimeters and guardians of the unifying message of the Psalms. Walter Brueggemann, "Bounded by Obedience and Praise: The Psalms as Canon," *JSOT* 50 (1991): 64; Mitchell suggests that the Psalter has an eschatological program of God. David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Books of Psalms* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 15; McCann's holistic theological theme of the psalms is "The Lord Reigns." McCann, *A Theological Introduction*, 9-10. However, the canonical approach can be very helpful to a broader picture of the Psalms, considering the thematic unity or progression in the Psalms, yet it may face a danger of overlooking the various theological or doctrinal truths in the book of the Psalms. Concerning the limitations of canonical approach to the Psalms, See S. Jonathan Murphy, "Is The Psalter a Book with a Single Message?," *BSac* 165 (2008): 283.

[37]Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 237.

theological process for preaching a lament psalm is to identify and develop the theological and doctrinal truth from the text.

Given that the interpreter as a preacher must discover theological/doctrinal truths from the lament psalms, the question is how to discern proper theological/doctrinal truths from them. Fortunately, for an interpreter, the theological and doctrinal richness of a lament psalm and the inexact historical contexts behind many make this theological examination relatively easy.

Although some lament psalms have titles that suggest their historical contexts, the general historical contexts of most lament psalms are ambiguous or general and thus broadly applicable. In this respect, the lament psalms can be the least situational.[38] In addition, the phraseology and imagery used within the lament psalms is typical and flexible.[39] In fact, these factors— historical inexactness and universal applicability by the use of general metaphorical language—are related to the genre characteristics of lament psalms. Concerning the textual ambiguity of genre characteristic, Gorman writes,

> Ambiguity, however, is not always in the eye of the beholder. It is not always the "fault" of the reader. Sometimes the text itself is inherently ambiguous; we would probably conclude that the author intended to be that way. Deliberate ambiguity is evocative, allowing or even forcing readers to ponder the text more carefully, asking "What in the world does this mean?" Ambiguity can be an invitation to engagement.[40]

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[38]Concerning this issue, see Patrick D. Miller, "Interpreting the Psalms: Some Clues from Their History and Content," in *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 18-28.

[39]Among many, Miller states, "the language of the [lament] psalms is open and metaphorical." Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 51. Williamson also states, "It is obvious that much of the language in the psalms of lament is metaphorical and pictorial, and that it makes use of stereotypical phraseology to give this expression, particularly in those sections where the psalmists describe their actual sufferings." H. G. M. Williamson, "Reading the Lament Psalms Backwards," in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology In Honor of Patrick D. Miller*, ed. Brent A. Strawn and Nancy R. Bowen (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 4.

[40]Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009),

Concerning the psalms, Longman states, "In most cases the references are vague, and we have every reason to believe they are so intentionally. The psalms are purposefully vague in reference to historical events so that they can be used in a variety of situations."[41] Ambiguity regarding historical context, combined with the flexibility of metaphorical language, are not barriers to understanding; rather, they amplify the trans-historical and trans-cultural nature of the psalms, and help the interpreter to de-contextualize and re-contextualize it.[42] The interpreter can easily identify the theological/doctrinal message in a lament psalm without paying too much attention to the historical context and the use of language.[43]

To develop the theological focus of a lament psalm, the interpreter must discern what kind of theological/doctrinal truths the text expresses. In a lament, the theological or doctrinal statements in a particular set of verses, or even single verse, sometimes hold an entire pericope together, thereby making it easier for the interpreter to identify them.[44] In fact, the interpreter can develop several theological truths from the

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[41]Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 27.

[42]Concerning the deliberate ambiguity of biblical poetry and its exegetical and theological significances, see Patrick D. Miller, "The Theological Significance of Biblical Poetry," in *Language, Theology, and the Bible: Essays in Honor of James Barr*, ed. Samuel E. Balentine, John Barton, and James Barr (Oxford: Calerndon Press, 1994), 213-27; and Paul R. Raabe, "Deliberate Ambiguity in the Psalter," *JBL* 110 (1991): 213-27.

[43]For instance, though in Ps 3, the historical background of Absalom's rebellion is given in the superscription, the author of Psalm 3 generally describes his suffering, and in the midst of suffering he expresses his trust in God who protects (vv. 3, 5), answers (v. 4), delivers (vv. 7, 8) the psalmist and vindicates him against his enemies (v. 8). In Ps 6, the psalmist in his distress also expresses his trust in God who delivers (v. 4) and answers (vv. 8, 9). In Ps 13, the most typical individual lament psalm, the lamenter in distress questions God, yet also entreats and praises the God who answers (v. 3), delivers (v. 5), and blesses him (v. 6). Thus, the interpreter can easily develop the general theological/doctrinal statements from the text.

[44]C. Hassell Bullock, "Preaching in the Poetic Literature," in *Handbook of Contemporary*

thematic units in a lament psalm. Yet, he almost always can find a central theological/doctrinal big idea in particular verses as a conceptual framework that governs a whole lament psalm.[45] Consequently, in the theological process, while discerning several theological truths from the text, the interpreter should find a textual center or focal point and develop a theological/doctrinal big idea that will become the 'glue' that holds the thought system together.[46]

Additionally, when developing the theological/doctrinal big idea of a lament, the interpreter must consider the motif of the text. The lament is the psalmist's outcry when, in great distress, he has nowhere to turn but to God. In other words, the essence of a lament psalm lies in the tension between *Sitz im Glauben* (faith situation) and S*itz im Leben* (life situation). As Gunton states, theologies and doctrines "offer a coherent exposition of the Christian faith, a conceptual reconstruction of the content of Christian faith, and a fundamental orientation of the Christian life."[47] In this respect, identifying theological/doctrinal clues of a lament psalm and developing them into a theological/doctrinal big idea in the theological process provides a theoretical framework that helps the interpreter grasp the fundamental motif and message of the text—the essence of the lament psalm.

Preaching, ed. Michael Duduit (Nashville: B&H, 1992), 294-95.

[45]Returning to the previous examples, the main theological motif of the Psalmist's trust in God in Ps 3 converges on the particular statement, "Deliverance belongs to God" (v. 8). In Ps 6, the psalmist's theological motif is clearly expressed in vv. 4 and 9, "Turn, O Lord, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love" (v. 4) and "The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord accepts my prayer" (v. 9). In Ps 13, the main theological motif and the lamenter's several statements of his faith in God are well encapsulated in v. 5, "But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation" (v. 5).

[46]Bullock, "Preaching in the Poetic Literature," 295.

[47]Colin E. Gunton, *Doctrine of Creation: Essays in Dogmatics, History and Philosophy* (London: Continnum International, 2004), 152.

In short, since the primary task in the theological process is to articulate timeless theological propositions, the interpreter as a preacher in the theological process should discover what phases of theology and doctrine are being addressed in a lament psalm and develop timeless theological principles from the text. He should then develop a theological or doctrinal big idea that governs the motif and message of the text. In this way, developing a theological/doctrinal big idea can be the focal point of a holistic theological process for preaching a lament psalm. Thus, until he can articulate this theological big idea along with other theological truths, the interpreter cannot expect to preach a clear, single-subject exposition.

Discerning Genre Characteristics: Theological Implication and Communicational Impact

A timeless conceptual and communicational 'matrix' or 'map'. In the theological process, the interpreter should primarily develop timeless theological truths and a theological big idea that can highlight the overall motif and message of the text. The interpreter, however, should not stop by identifying these truths on the conceptual level. He needs to examine how they are expressed or communicated by the textual organization, because genre features provide not only timeless transferable concepts (the message of the text) but also timeless transferable empathy to the contemporary audience via the textual organization (the medium and mood of the text).

As mentioned before, when the author chooses a genre, the chosen genre must be the most effective communicative tool for delivering its total message and impact. A text's genre is the author's cognitive and communicative map that guides the reader, even at a distance in terms of time and space, to respond as the author intended. The reader's

response takes the shape and spirit of whatever genre the author employs in communication. Thus, the formal and functional elements in textual organization are not merely literary devices to express the author's meaning, but also convey the author's conceptual and communicative strategies, carrying the cognitive implication and total communicational impact to the reader. In this sense, the genre characteristic of a given text provides a particular cognitive and communicational map the interpreter should respect in communicating the textual meaning and impact to the contemporary audience. Therefore, the interpreter needs to investigate the textual organization (the medium and mood of the text) in relation to the theological/doctrinal truths of a lament psalm (the message of the text) in order to honor the theological and communicational nature of the text which the biblical author intentionally inscribed.

In line with this nature of generic function, in order to fully grasp the theological and communicational uniqueness of a lament psalm, the interpreter needs to consider both its theological substance and its manner of expressing that theological substance. In fact, the subject and substance of theological investigation into the lament psalms is a prayer based upon the divine-human relation.[48] A lament psalm as both a prayer to God and God's word to us inherently includes the unique divine and human dimension from both theological and communicational perspectives.[49] In fact, the psalmist normally does not enumerate the theological/doctrinal truths in an impersonal or

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[48]Westermann states, "The lament is an inevitable part of what happened between God and man." Westermann, "The Role of the Lament," 22.

[49]While concluding that the psalms provide the discourse of God in the settings of the experiences of life and thus are the place to begin for structuring a theology of Hebrew Scriptures, Bellinger states that the psalms communicate powerful theology for people today. William. H. Bellinger Jr., "The Psalms as a Place to Begin for Old Testament Theology," in *Psalms and Practice: Worship, Virtue, and Authority*, ed. Stephen Breck Reid (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 36.

abstract form of proposition. Rather, he responds to real life experiences in the light of his understanding of God, and his responses are reflected into various structural arrangements with different formal and functional elements such as invocation, petition, complaint, confession, imprecation, profession, and praise.[50] In short, the lamenter's expression of his theology "from below" is inherently reflected into literary dynamics engendered by the various structural arrangements with different formal and functional constituents that he deliberately chose.[51]

Furthermore, what distinguishes the lament psalms from other biblical genre is that the theological substance of the text is presented and communicated in the lamenter's emotional expressions in the tension between his belief and experience.[52] In fact, the emotions expressed in the lament depend upon a literary structure and arrangement. In this sense, the emotional movements of the text inevitably operate with the structural movement. Consequently, the theological and communicational nature of a lament psalm is established by its structure (the medium of the text) and spirit (the mood of the text) as

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[50]For instances, while the psalmist's expression of a theological/doctrinal idea, "God who delivers" (v. 3) in Ps 3 is found in his petition to God, a theological/doctrinal idea, "God who sustains" (v. 5) and "Deliverance belongs to the Lord" (v. 8) is the expression in the midst of professing and praising God. In Ps 6, theological statements as to God, "God who delivers" (v. 4) and "God who answers" (v. 9) are expressed in the function of petition to God, the psalmist expresses his confidence in God with a theological statement, "God who answers" (v. 9). In Ps 13, a theological statement, "God who answers" (v. 3) functions as the psalmist's petition to God, but a theological statement, "God who deliver and bless" (v. 5, 6) functions as the psalmist's praise to God.

[51]For the different formal/functional elements of lament psalms, see Table A2 in Appendix 2. In addition, as to how these exegetical findings are made into theological principles, see pp. 125-31 in this chapter.

[52]In this sense, Longman states, "the lament genre is primarily defined by its mood." Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 28. Concerning the relationship between the intellectual and emotional contents of the psalms, see Daniel M. Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&G, 2001), 92; Charlotte I. Lee, and Timothy Gura, *Oral Interpretation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 342; and H. Wayne House and Daniel G. Garland, *God's Message, Your Sermon: Discover, Develop, and Deliver What God Meant by What He Said* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 181.

well as its substance (the message of the text). Thus, for a text-honoring preacher, the textual organization should be regarded as both clarifying and communicational channels for effective communication.[53] By considering the textual organization (the medium and mood of the text) in the theological or principlizing process, the interpreter can fully grasp the conceptual and communicational relevance of the text to the contemporary audience.

To be specific, with regard to the medium and mood of the lament psalms, many scholars have recognized the theological/communicational implications and impacts of the most common structural/emotional movement from lament to praise. Westermann identifies a fixed sequence of formal and functional elements caused by the threefold thematic dimensions toward characters of lament psalms (self, God, and enemies), and argues that the essential internal transition from lament to praise exhibits a lament theology.[54] Accordingly, he remarks that "the structure of the psalm of lament, which enables us to see the path leading to an alleviation of suffering, is one of the most powerful witnesses to the experience of God's activity in the Old Testament."[55] Bruggemann also suggests that understanding the characteristic structure of a lament psalm helps the interpreter see how Israel understood and experienced suffering and how it interpreted that suffering in the context of her faith.[56] He further argues that the typical

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[53]Johnson, *Expository Hermeneutics*, 108.

[54]Westermann, "The Role of the Lament," 26. See also Clause Westermann, *The Psalms: Structure, Content, and Message*, trans. Ralph D. Gehrke (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980) and idem, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981).

[55]Westermann, "The Role of the Lament," 27.

[56]Walter Bruggemann, "From Hurt to Joy, from Death to Life," in *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 69-72.

movement from petition to praise gives expression to Israel's most fundamental conviction that "Yahweh is sovereign over the present situation and can work good out of it."[57] Subsequently, he concludes that the structural/emotional movement from petition to praise "cuts to the heart of the theological issue for faith," and that the function of this structure is inevitably theological.[58] In a similar vein, Miller emphasizes the importance of the internal movement from lament to praise based upon the interrelationship between the form and theology of the lament psalm.

> The movement that leads from the human cry for help to divine response, which, in turn, evokes a grateful reaction of praise and thanksgiving from the one(s) who cried out. Here is the heart of biblical prayer but also a divine-human dialogue or conversation that identifies the very structure of faith as it is lived out in the words and lives of those who walk the pages of Scripture. This movement is at the heart of biblical prayer.[59]

Consequently, investigating the structural/emotional movement from lament to praise helps the interpreter to develop a theological/doctrinal focus based upon the theological and communicational value of the lament psalms.

However, although the structural/emotional movement from lament to praise is common and crucial in the lament psalms, the interpreter must also be attentive to different structural/emotional movements in the lament psalms. Using the image of an ongoing cycle or spiral of praise-protest-plea-trust-thanksgiving-obedience,[60] John

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[57]Ibid., 77.

[58]Walter Bruggemann, "The Formfulness of Grief," in *The Psalms and the Life of Faith,* ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 96. In his article, Bruggemann argues that the form of lament made possible the "transforming intervention of God."

[59]Patrick D. Miller, *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 3.

[60]John Goldingay, "The Dynamic Cycle of Praise and Prayer in the Psalms," *JSOT* 20 (1981): 88.

Goldingay rejects the one-directional understanding of lament to praise, and proposes more dynamic movements in understanding the lament psalms. Goldingay's proposal warns the interpreter of the tendency to overemphasize the praise-oriented movement, and thus highlights the need for scrutiny of structural/emotional movement in an individual lament psalm in order to identify text-faithful theological/communicational implications and impacts. Arguing against the overemphasis of the movement from lament to praise, Federico Villanueva also analyzes the various structural/emotional movements of the lament psalms and categories them in several different movements—(1) movement from lament to praise, (2) movement from praise to lament, (3) return to lament even after a movement to praise, (4) alternating movement between lament and praise, and (5) absence of movement.[61] He further suggests that different theological implications and communicational impact can be inferred from these structural/emotional movements. Consequently, he concludes that without actual analysis of the structural/emotional movements, the overemphasis or imposition of one-directional movement from lament to praise in the text can lessen the theological/communicational importance of the lament psalms.

Due to the unique theological and communicational nature of a lament psalm, some of the author-intended impact upon the readers through the text cannot be reducible to mere propositions. In order to honor the biblical author's intended meaning and impact, the interpreter in the theological or principlizing process needs to preserve the

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[61]Federico G. Villanueva, *The 'Uncertainty of a Hearing': A Study of the Sudden Change of Mood in the Psalms of Lament*, SVT 121 (Leiden: Brill, 2008). See also Federico G. Villanueva, "Preaching Lament," in *Reclaiming the Old Testament for Christian Preaching*, ed. Grenville J. R. Kent, Paul J. Kissling, and Laurence A. Turner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 64-84.

cognitive and communicative strategies recommended through the text via the genre characteristics. Thus, the interpreter should not flatten the theological process in order to find the theological message of a lament psalm. Rather, he should carefully investigate how the theological/doctrinal truths are communicated through or interrelated with the textual organization (genre characteristics). In this vein, since various structural/emotional movements of the lament psalms have different theological implications and communicational impacts, which can represent the very essence of that genre, the interpreter as a preacher needs to examine not only their contents but also their actual structural/emotional elements and movements, without imposing a one-directional programmatic matrix onto the text. Therefore, a text-faithful investigation into the medium and mood of a lament psalm is not a secondary task, but rather an essential part of unpacking the distinct theological/communicational implication and impact of a particular lament psalm for the contemporary audience.

In summary, a theological examination of the theological/doctrinal truth is the primary task in the theological process for preaching a lament psalm. However, genre characteristics provide the interpreter as a preacher a conceptual and communicational map with which he can faithfully transpose what the biblical author intended to communicate and how the biblical author intended to impact upon the contemporary audience. Thus, an investigation into genre characteristics and examination of the structural/emotional movements of the lament psalms (the medium and mood of the text) is a necessary task. Ultimately, this holistic genre-sensitive theological process can help the interpreter pursue more text-based and text-honoring preaching of lament psalms.

The Procedure of a Holistic Theological Method for Lament Psalms

In the previous section, I argued that a holistic theological method for preaching a lament psalm necessarily includes genre considerations when articulating timeless and relevant theological/doctrinal ideas to communicate the author's intended meaning and impact to the contemporary audience. In the following section, I describe how this holistic theological method for a lament psalm can be practiced with genre-sensitivity. Although the overview of this holistic theological process makes it appear to be a simple sequence, the actual procedure is basically retroductive, and involves checking and balancing among the text, the exegetical details, and theological truths in pursuit of discerning what this text may mean and how this text may impact the contemporary audience.[62]

Developing Theological/Doctrinal Ideas

The most important task in the theological process for preaching a lament psalm is to identify and develop theological/doctrinal ideas from the text that can be applicable to both the original and the contemporary audiences. As an initial step for this process, the interpreter needs to restate the technical, specific, and metaphorical terms in the exegetical findings into more general and universal terms in an attempt to overcome the historical, cultural, and linguistic differences between the original and contemporary audiences.

Paraphrasing the specific terms into more general and universal terms.

[62]Willhite, *Preaching with Relevance*, 63.

Warren argues that the first stage of the theological process in sermon preparation is the process of stylizing, defining it as "moving from technical, exegetical language to general, theological language."[63] In the case of preaching a lament psalm, this stylizing process is relatively simple in comparison with that of other biblical genres, because the text itself is written in less specific and less contextual terms.[64] Accordingly, chances are high that the exegetical findings (the meaning and purpose of the text) are already expressed in more general, universal terms, revealing the mutuality between the life presented in the text and our situation today.[65] In addition, since lament psalms as prayers are usually written in the present tense, and the exegetical statements derived from the condensed poetic writings may be shorter and simpler than in other biblical genres, this stylizing process in the theological process often overlaps with the exegetical process. Thus, the restatements of the exegetical statement into more general, theological expressions should naturally be shorter and less complex.

Nevertheless, in the stylizing process for a lament psalm, the interpreter needs to be attentive to the various titles or epithets used for God, as well as diverse imagery and metaphorical expressions that apply to God, the lamenter(s), and/or enemies. Such

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[63]Warren, "The Theological Process," 337-38.

[64]Typically in the lament psalms, the specific situations and identification of the lamenters and enemies are difficult to discern because of their use of stereotypical and metaphorical language. In addition, the text shows that the lamenter relates the contents of his prayer and praise to God's people (e.g., Ps 3:8; 5:12; 9:11-12; 22:22-31; 31:23-24; 40:16).

[65]Chapell refers to this mutuality as the "fallen condition focus," defining as "the mutual human condition that contemporary believer share with those to or about whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage for God's people to glorify and enjoy him." Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 50. Chapell argues that this mutual fallen condition of humanity interacting with God's immutable and transcendent attributes and actions provides a valid purpose and application in sermon preparation. For further discussion, see chaps. 2 and 10 of Chapell's book.

expressions are closely connected to the formal and functional elements, and thereby provide the lamenter's characterizations of God and his explanation or intensification of his suffering.[66] Accordingly, when paraphrasing these expressions into general terms, the interpreter must be careful not to change or distort the lamenter's understanding of God and his understanding and experience of his distress as he intended.

Articulating the theological/doctrinal ideas of a lament psalm. After eliminating the technical, specific, and metaphorical language of exegesis, the interpreter needs to articulate theological truths from the text in timeless and universal terms.[67] If the interpreter can successfully articulate proper theological truths of the text, each theological proposition can function as a "principlizing bridge or arc," which enables the interpreter to traverse the gap between the past and present with a truth that is relevant to both.[68] In fact, to articulate theological/doctrinal ideas as principlized statements is the result of the theological process for preaching, and plays the role of the theological focus for the whole theological process.

In order to have a proper theological/doctrinal idea, Warren specifically points

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[66]The lamenters usually used YHWH linked with various formal and functional elements such as invocation, petition, professions, and praise; yet they also used Elohim. An example of the lamenter's use of different epithets is found in Ps 3, where epithets such as "my glory" and "the one who raises my head" are employed to describe God's attributes and activity. In Ps 31, epithets such as "my fortress" and "faithful God" are used to describe God. In addition, various epithets such as my strength, my deliverance/deliverer, my rock, our shield are commonly used with the lamenters' petitions.

[67]Concerning the issue of normative teaching or permanent principles of Scripture, see J. Robertson McQuilkin, "Problem of Normativeness in Scripture: Cultural Versus Permanent," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 217-40. In order to discern between cultural relativity and normative teaching of Scripture, McQuilkin, in this article, emphasizes the priority of exegesis over the application of the text.

[68]Roy B. Zuck, "Application in Biblical Hermeneutics and Exposition," in *Rightly Divided: Readings in Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996), 290-91. See also W. James Farris, "The Hermeneutical Arc," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 4 (1988): 86-100.

out that the interpreter must follow at least three basic "theologizing" movements—biblical, canonical, systematic theological. According to Warren, in the biblical theological movements, the interpreter must identify the biblical author's world-view including his view of God, creation, and their relations and he also must account for the theological motifs and themes expressed in a unit of meaning in relation to other units of text. In the canonical theological movement, the interpreter should discover the connections between the theological motifs and themes of biblical theology and their counterparts in the progressive and final development of biblical revelation. In the systematic theological movement, the interpreter verifies his own expression of the theological message of the text with systematic statements of biblical truth.[69]

Basically, the theological process for preaching a lament psalm has little difference from Warren's three basic movements. Theological process might be even simpler in comparison to other biblical genres, because theological/doctrinal clues and statements of the text are usually apparent and the exegetical ideas can be expressed in more general and theological terms with less technical, specific, and contextual elements. Although the "theologizing" process may be relatively shorter than other genres, the interpreter needs to be attentive to the unique characteristics of the lament genre at each biblical, canonical, and systematic movement. The following procedure for the textual horizon, the biblical-canonical theological horizon, and the systematic theological horizon focuses on the uniqueness of the lament psalms.

At the textual horizon, the interpreter may summarize the typical main

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[69]Warren "The Theological Process," 339-49. To understand these theological movements for sermon, see also Montgomery, "The Theologian's Craft," 67-98; and Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 293-310.

theological subject or theme of a lament psalm—the lamenter's trust in God's attributes and activities in the midst of his distress. However, if the interpreter ceases interpreting at this textual horizon, he might be tempted to appropriate and apply most lament psalms as personal expressions of the trust in God in the midst of our own trials. Although this application is not entirely inappropriate, the interpreter can miss the deeper theological substance of the text. In order to identify the deeper theological principle, the interpreter must discern both the biblical author's understanding of God (faith situation) and of his situation (life situation) by attending to the lamenter's personal references and metaphorical expressions toward God and himself.[70] In addition, he must account for the overall motif and message behind the lament psalm expressed in the text by understanding the tension between faith-situation and life-situation—the theological essence of a lament genre.

If the interpreter has any preconceived theological framework at the textual horizon, there is a danger of simplifying the complexity of reality and of the text itself within that theological framework. The interpreter needs, instead, to distinguish between imposing his own theological framework upon the text, from identifying the theological framework within which the biblical author made certain basic theological affirmations in the text. In this sense, it is important for the interpreter to recognize the covenantal theological framework of the lament psalms at the textual horizon.

Due to the psalms' comprehensive contribution to biblical and systematic

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[70] The interpreter usually can identify the lamenter's understanding of God by focusing on his references including names, epithets, and metaphorical expressions of God's attributes and His actions. In addition, the lamenter's self-quotations or ki-sentences often describe his life-situation.

theology,[71] the controlling theological center of the psalms varies according to scholars. However, the general consensus on the common theological framework of the book of psalms converges upon God's sovereignty and His relationship with His people—God's dominion over and communion with His people within the covenantal relationship.[72] This covenantal theological motif is particularly apparent in the lament psalms, and it presupposes the overall motif of the lament psalms at the textual horizon.

Westermann identifies the lament motif as the essential element in the covenantal relationship between God and humanity. He thus argues that, "In the Old Testament, from beginning to end, the 'call of distress,' the 'cry out of the depths,' that is, the lament, is an inevitable part of what happens between God and man."[73] Miller also

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[71]Mays calls the book of psalms "a virtual compendium of themes and topics found in the rest of the Old Testament." James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 1. Goldingay also states, "The Psalms (arguably the deepest theology in Scripture, or at least in the OT) hint that an appropriate from for systematic theology in Scripture is that of adoration, thanksgiving, and lament, or at least that a context of adoration, thanksgiving, and lament ought to be a fruitful one for theological reflection on biblical narrative." John Goldingay, "Biblical Narrative and Systematic Theology," in *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic theology*, ed. J. B. Green and M. Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 137-38. Paul House concurs, "As a theological document, the book of psalms embraces the full range of biblical confessions about God's character, activity, and concerns." Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 402.

[72]The best representative of using "covenant" as a center of the Psalms is Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of Old Testament*, The Old Testament Library, trans. J. A. Baker, 2 vols, 6th ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967). Others who use "covenant" as centers are Henning Graf Reventlow, *Problems of Old Testament Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), and Fredick C. Prussner, "The Covenant of David and the Problem of Unity in Old Testament Theology," in *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Coert Rylaarsdam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 17-41. One theologian who ties the concept of covenant together with creation is William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993). Identifying the covenant as a basic framework of the psalms, Craigie also states, "the theological richness of the psalms emerges out of a profound knowledge of God rooted in relationship; at bottom, the framework for all dimensions of that relationship provided by the covenant. Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, WBC, vol. 19 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 40. See also Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 62; Patrick D. Miller, "Enthroned on the Praises of Israel: The Praise of God in Old Testament Theology," *Int* 39 (1985): 7; and Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: B&H, 2006), 570.

[73]Westermann, *Praise and Lament* , 261.

states that the basic motif of the lament psalms contributes to broad thematic features by drawing attention to some feature of God's nature and character, or to lift up some aspects of the situation of the petitioner(s).[74] He also recognizes that these features overlap with each other and thus provide "different aspects of single reality."[75] This "single reality" in the lament psalms clearly points to or at least implies the covenantal relationship between God and His own people. Bruggemann concurs that the most important observation regarding the lamenter's real hurts and honest expressions of reality is that the issue is fundamentally grounded in the relationship between God and His people. He states,

> Most importantly, the lament shows clearly *that biblical faith, as it faces life fully, is uncompromisingly and unembarrassedly dialogic*. Israel and Israelites in their hurt have to do with God and he has to do with them. . . . And the hurtful issues must be dealt with precisely in the presence of God.[76]

Haddix also avers that the lament flows from the apparent disconnect between the covenantal relationship of the psalmist and his present experience. He thus states, "It seems to me that lamentation . . . is the form through which the people of Israel struggle to understand their election, their closeness . . . . The psalmists . . . know themselves to be members of a people with whom Yahweh has established a special relationship."[77] In short, the motifs of the lament psalms presuppose the covenantal relationship between

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[74]Patrick D. Miller, "Prayer as Persuasion: the Rhetorical and Intention of Prayer," *Word and World* 8 (1993): 357.

[75]Miller explains that the covenantal theological paradigm as the fundamental thematic framework hold together three thematic dimensional components toward God and self, and also make sense of them. Patrick D. Miller, "Trouble and Woe: Interpreting the Biblical Laments," in *Interpreting the Psalms* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986), 56-57.

[76]Bruggemann, "From Hurt to Joy," 68.

[77]James Lewis Haddix, *Lamentation as Personal Experience in Selected Psalms* (Boston:

God and psalmist.

This covenantal theological motif also undergirds the overall message of the lament psalms.[78] Although the specific term of covenant is largely absent from lament psalms,[79] the covenantal theological motif is assumed at the outset of the lament psalms. The fact that the psalmists boldly and directly communicate with God demonstrates that there is an established relationship already in existence. Accordingly, in the lament psalms, there is no request to form a covenant with God. Rather, there is a concern with the possible loss of the covenantal relationship. Additionally, the lament psalm is apparently characterized by the expressions of suffering and the petitions or complaints to God. The most recurrent and fundamental literary motif and the message of the lament psalms can be identified as the lamenters' petitions or complaints. Accordingly, the central aim of this genre seems to be to appeal to God for His intervention based upon the relationship between God and His people. Consequently, while the interpreter identifies the biblical author's understanding of God and his situation at the textual horizon, and thus develops a theological truth of the lament psalm, he should also check how the textual message is closely related to the basic motif and overall message that is

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Boston University Press, 1980), 233.

[78]William H. Bellinger Jr., "Portraits of Faith: The Scope of Theology in Psalms," in *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms: Festschrift Marvin E. Tate*, ed. H. Wayne Ballard, Jr. and W. Dennis Tucker, Jr. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 115.

[79]William H. Bellinger Jr., *Psalmody and Prophecy*, JSOTSup 27 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 60-61. Bellinger states, "The term [covenant] in the lament psalms does seem to indicate a relationship between Yahweh and his people, however, that is conceived, and a relationship to which Yahweh is intensely loyal." McCann also observes that God's steadfast love, *hesed*, within a covenant framework is the source of confidence when psalmists find themselves in trouble. McCann, *A Theological Introduction*, 87. Concerning the specific usage of the term, *hesed*, in the selected lament psalms, see Lee Sung-Hun, "Lament and the Joy of Salvation in the Lament Psalms," in *The Book of Psalms: Composition & Reception*, ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 224-47.

fundamentally based upon the covenantal theological framework.

Once the interpreter finishes studying a lament psalm at the textual horizon, he should advance the "theologizing" process at the biblical/canonical horizon.[80] The primary task of this biblical/canonical theological movement is to study the biblical theology of the text and to consider the proper connections between the earlier expressions of biblical theology and their counterparts in the progress of biblical revelation.[81] Thus, the interpreter must place a lament psalm in the whole biblical/canonical context and examine its theological truth, motif, and theme in the context of the entire Scripture, considering how they would continue or change throughout the progression and development of that truth, motif, and theme in all of Scripture. The point is that through this biblical/canonical theological approach, the interpreter, while keeping the authorial intention of the text, can discover "the continuity of a text's meaning in sacred history along with recognizing that further reflection won for the earlier text a deeper and clearer meaning."[82]

As with other biblical genres, the interpreter needs to recognize where the selected lament psalm fits in the development of God's revelation. Here again, the interpreter's recognition of the covenant theological framework of the text is important.

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[80]The movements from biblical, canonical, and systematic horizons are developed from an earlier work by Edmund Clowney's three horizons of Scripture—the textual, the epochal, and the canonical. See Lints, *The Fabric of Theology*, 293-310. However, the biblical theological horizon is often overlapped with the canonical theological movement. See Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 284.

[81]Warren, "The Theological Process," 341.

[82]Bruce K. Waltke, "A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms," in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*, ed. John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982), 7.

In fact, the interpreter must do his best to understand the text in its epochal context,[83] which can be distinguished by the major biblical covenants.[84] Since different epochal contexts can lead to different interpretation of the text, the interpreter's recognition of epochs is essential for proper interpretation and application. In many cases, the titles of the psalms may provide the clues to which epochal (covenant) context governs the text. However, due to the inexactness or ambiguity of the historical location of the individual lament psalm, it is probably best to take a possible yet cautious approach to the historical clues of the titles. Although the interpreter can cautiously attempt to understand the text in its epochal context, he usually needs to place the text under the rubric of different epochal (covenant) contexts of Old Testament and then New Testament, noting how different theological significances of the author's intended meaning can be derived from the different epochal (covenant) contexts.[85] In doing so, the interpreter, while keeping the author's intended meaning of the text, can extend the horizons of the interpretation according to different epochal/canonical contexts.

At this horizon, the interpreter ultimately needs to consider the Christological

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[83]Concerning this issue, see Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 82. Kaiser maintains that it is both theologically and hermeneutically wrong to import the completed canon of Scripture as context into the exegesis of Old Testament, unless the interpreter firmly establishes on exegetical grounds precisely what the text meant in the books that preceded the selected text.

[84]Although there is disagreement among scholars over several of biblical covenants, the major examples are the covenant of creation, Noahic covenant, Abrahamic covenant, Mosaic covenant, Davidic covenant and new covenant. Concerning the epochal contexts by different covenants, see O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1981), 167-70.

[85]In this regards, Waltke suggests that the interpreter must understand each psalm in respect to four distinctive points in the progressive revelation of Scripture: (1) the meaning of the psalm to the original poet, (2) its meaning in the earlier collections of psalms associated with the first temple, (3) its meaning in the final and complete Old Testament canon associated with the second temple, and (4) its meaning in the full canon of the Bible including the New Testament. See Waltke, "A Canonical Process Approach," 3-18.

significance (the new covenant) of the chosen lament psalm. After all, the interpreter and the contemporary audience live in the New Testament age, and they also live on the resurrection side of the cross. By advancing this biblical/canonical theological movement, the interpreter must attempt to understand the Christological significance of the chosen lament psalm in order to communicate it to the contemporary audience.[86] In fact, the understanding of the Christological significance of the lament psalm can provide the interpreter helpful insights concerning the theological unity of the Bible[87] and the essential role of biblical/covenantal theological movement in the "theologizing" process for sermon-making. Consequently, the interpreter should be solidly grounded upon authorial intent, considering the covenant theological motif and message expressed at the textual horizon. At the same time, an interpreter also must read the lament psalm with a biblical/canonical view as a whole, keeping the unity of the Scripture within the covenantal theological framework. In this way, the interpreter, at the biblical/canonical horizon, can read the text both from front to back and back to front, considering the perspective of biblical author as well as the perspective of the whole Scripture and of the divine author.

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[86]Scholars propose different approaches to outlining the Christological significances of the lament psalms. See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008); Waltke, "A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms," 3-18; Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 269-96; Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961); idem, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988); idem, "The Singing Savior," *Moody Monthly* (July-August 1979): 40-42; Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007; Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 196-212; John H. Stek, "Introduction to Psalms," in *The NIV Study Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 786.

[87]This unity of Bible can be summarized as the covenant faithfulness of God, who continues to save His people as He did at the different covenantal epochs.

The final stage of the "theologizing" process is the systematic theological movement.[88] The primary purpose of this movement is to "test and qualify the expositor's expression of the theological message in a specific text with systematic statements of biblical truth."[89] Accordingly, at this systematic theological horizon, the interpreter needs to validate whether the theological propositions he has developed in the previous "theologizing" movements is adequate and coherent with all the biblical truth. However, this systematic theological movement does not seek to include all the biblical data on a particular theological theme in the sermon-making process. Rather, it focuses on discovering and verifying the timeless, universal, trans-cultural theological propositions the interpreter has developed from the text in the "theologizing" process.[90]

This systematic theological movement provides significant benefits for the interpreter in articulating the theological/doctrinal ideas and then inferring their significances. First, it can allow the interpreter to relate the theological proposition developed in the "theologizing" process to all sorts of biblical teachings on a given topic. Second, it helps the interpreter to check the accuracy of the formulated theological/doctrinal propositions within a coherent theological framework. Third, and more importantly, it also helps the interpreter automatically relate the theological truths to the contemporary audience, because it has a strong concern for contemporary

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[88]Warren, "A Paradigm for Preaching" 477.

[89]Warren, "The Theological Process," 341-42.

[90]To verify the theological proposition, Warren suggests that the interpreter should ask several subsequent questions in the whole theological process: (1) "Is this theological proposition the biblical theology of the unit?" (2) "Does it 'fit' the theology of the book and author?" (3) "Does this theological proposition 'fit' the progressively completed revelation?" (4) "Does this theological proposition 'fit' a veritable system of theology?" See Warren, "The Theological Process," 342.

relevance.[91]

The systematic theological movement is relatively simple in preaching the lament psalms. The interpreter is required to continually return to the horizon of the text and moving from it to the horizon of the reader—the hermeneutical spiral.[92] In lament psalms, the doctrinal statements are easily recognizable from the textual horizon and they govern the theological theme of the text. In this respect, while the systematic theological movement for preaching the lament psalms must be the final stage of the "theologizing" process, the doctrinal statements at the textual horizon often function as the starting point which guides the interpreter throughout the interpretive horizons of the "theologizing" process—textual, biblical/canonical, and systematic theological horizon.

Discerning Genre Characteristic:
Its Theological Implication and
Communicational Impact

While developing the theological/doctrinal ideas of a lament psalm, the interpreter also needs an examination of the particular genre characteristic of the text, its theological implication and communicational impact. It is often assumed that a theological investigation into the biblical text intends to understand what the text meant

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[91]As Warren states, the primary goal of the systematic theological movement is to verify the timeless theological truth, which is derived from Scripture, the only authoritative and normative source for the whole "theologizing" process. However, the trajectory of the systematic theological movement naturally culminates in the applications of the truth to our lives today. In this sense, the systematic theological movement is the starting point for the specific applications in the homiletical process. Concerning the emphasis upon the application of the biblical truth to life in systematic theology, see Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 24; John Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006), 79; and D. A. Carson, "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000), 100-01.

[92]Concerning the more detailed explanation of the hermeneutical spiral, see Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 14.

and means; an investigation into the genre characteristic pursues how the text communicates what the text means. However, an investigation into the genre characteristic of the text is not theologically neutral because of an essential interrelationship among the message, medium and mood of the text. In this respect, an investigation into genre characteristic of the text is essential for identifying the message of the text; at the same time, it is also necessary for understanding both the biblical author's conceptual strategy for expressing his intended meaning and his communicational strategy for bringing the total impact of the text to bear on the audience. In fact, diverse genre characteristics conveyed with different cognitive and communicational strategies can produce different theological/communicational implications and impacts. Accordingly, if the interpreter ignores a distinguishing genre characteristic of a given text, he may lose some significant theological/communicational implication or impact of that text. For the faithful understanding and communication of the biblical text, the interpreter thus should discern how the distinguishing genre characteristic of the text is related to or influences the intended meaning and impact of the text.[93]

A particular genre characteristic of a lament psalm is usually dependent upon textual organization, which is composed of typical formal and functional elements such as invocation, petition, complaint, confession, imprecation, profession, and praise. In addition, different structural/emotional movements entailed by different formal and

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[93]For instance, Garrett encourages the interpreter as a preacher to focus on the structural analysis of the Psalms by stating, "Every Psalm can be analyzed to determine its structure. . . . In most cases, the psalmist's meaning and message will in some way be reflected in the structure of the Psalm, and often understanding a Psalm's structure can significantly clarify what it's all about." Duane A. Garrett, "Preaching from the Psalms and Proverbs," in *Preaching the Old Testament*, ed. Scott M. Gibson (Grand

functional elements uniquely describe a theological/doctrinal message. At the same time, such elements are intended to be the building blocks used to communicate the impact of the text. Consequently, in order to preach a lament psalm in a genre-sensitive manner, the interpreter needs to scrutinize the formal and functional elements in relation to the theological/doctrinal ideas, and then determine the theological implication and communicational impact derived from the structural/emotional elements and movements of a lament psalm in the theological process.

Considering the textual elements at the theological/communicational level. In order to discern a particular genre characteristic and its theological/communicational implication and impact, the interpreter first analyzes the formal and functional elements of a lament psalm.[94] Investigation into these textual elements should stem from the exegetical process for discovering the textual meaning, purpose, and effects. However, when considering these formal and functional elements in this theological process, the interpreter must attempt to understand how they help describe the theological/doctrinal ideas and communicate their intended impacts.

In the lament psalms, the formal and functional elements in the textual organization are the means for the motif and message to find expression. Accordingly, in actual analysis of these elements in the theological process, the interpreter must consider the relationship between these elements and the motif and message of the text. In this sense, it is helpful for the interpreter to understand how they are related to the covenant

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Rapids: Baker, 2006), 102.

[94]For the detailed analysis of structural/functional elements of lament psalms, see Table A2 in Appendix 2.

theological framework, which basically undergirds the motif and message of the lament psalm.

For instance, most of individual lament psalms, including all of the communal lament psalms, begin with invocation to God, a calling on God's name. As a first component, invocation implies that the lamenters are already in covenant relationship with God.[95] The compositional elements, petition or complaint, which are important characterizations of lament psalms, usually contain a description of the lamenter's problem and a request for God's intervention. Typical complaint language, e.g., "How long?" or "Why?", and strong direct petition for God's intervention, can be used in a context where God has the final answer and is responsible for correcting such a situation. In this context, the fundamental reason that the lamenter dares to complain and ask for God's intervention is the covenant relationship.[96] The components of petition at times associate with elements of confession, assertion of innocence, or imprecation. The elements of confession (e.g. Pss 7, 17, 26, 38, 51, and 59) or assertion of innocence (e.g., Pss 38 and 51) are often recognizable as constituent parts of lament psalms.[97] The ground on which the petitioner can confess sin is related to the covenantal relationship with God. In particular, the lamenter can assert his innocence before God not because he is sinless,

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[95]Robert J. V. Hiebert, "Psalms, Theology of," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 654.

[96]Obviously, their relationship is not dependent on the human condition, but rather on God, because God is the one in control of this relationship. However, when a lamenter is able to approach God with a genuine and honest conversation, the human-divine relationship reaches a heightened level.

[97]However, none of the communal laments contains a confession of sin. One may suggest that there are two possibilities for this lack of confession: (1) the psalmists on behalf of the community implies that God is responsible for the nation's troubles, or (2) it is quite conceivable that the community would deliberately omit confessing sin because it is confident that God would never forsake them based upon the covenant relationship. See Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 173-80.

but because he finds his blamelessness in terms of the covenant relationship. In addition, the imprecatory parts, virtually always found in laments, are the lamenter's call for God's judgment according to the covenant curses.[98] In other words, imprecation is a posture of total trust in God's justice based upon the covenantal relationship.[99] The component of profession demonstrates the lamenter's confidence and trust in God's past, present, and future saving grace.[100] In particular, this component serves an important function in reaffirming the covenantal relationship: no matter how dire the circumstances, the lamenter ends with hope in God's covenantal faithfulness. In most cases, the final component of the lament psalms is profession or praise. Through these components, the psalmists renew or strengthen relationship with God by promising God praise and thanksgiving for His goodness and deliverance. In short, a consideration of the formal and functional elements of a lament psalm necessarily operates with the covenant theological paradigm.[101]

The main point is that the interpreter must see each formal and functional element as a part of the author's intention. In other words, all these constituent parts of a lament psalm are the biblical author's designed avenues for describing and

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[98]Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 202-03. According to Fee and Stuart, the imprecatory parts which are virtually always found in laments are the lamenter's call for God's judgment according to the covenant curses.

[99]David G. Firth, *Surrendering Retribution in the Psalms: Responses to Violence in Individual Complaints* (Milton Keynes, UK: Authentic Media, 2005), 139.

[100]Bernhard W. Anderson, *Out of Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today* (Philadelphia: The Westminster, 1983), 77. In fact, the communal laments mention God's past deeds more often than the individual lament psalms (e.g., Pss 44:7; 74:12-17; 80:8-11; 89:10-12).

[101]In this regard, Bellinger concludes that the lament psalms, in which the lamenters address God, describe their crisis, cry for help, and praises for God, all in the context of an honest covenant dialogue of faith. Bellinger, "Portrait of Faith," 117.

communicating the textual meaning and impact within the covenantal theological paradigm. Thus, while analyzing the actual formal and functional elements of a lament psalm, the interpreter must consider what kind of formal and functional elements are employed in a given lament psalm and understand how each constituent part communicates the theological/doctrinal proposition with intended textual impact, without discarding any constituent part in textual organization.

Considering the textual movements at the theological/communicational level. Having considered the interrelationship between each formal and functional element and the biblical author's intended meaning and impact, the interpreter's next step is discerning structural/emotional movements in the text and determining their timeless theological implications and communicational impacts.

While emphasizing that dynamic movements of the lament psalms characterize the very essence of the lament theology, especially the tension between faith-situation and life-situation, Villanueva categorizes and suggests different theological implications and communicational impacts inferred from different structural/emotional movements.[102] According to Villanueva, the dominant movement from lament to praise (e.g., Ps 13) in the lament psalms provides a typical theological message: God answers prayer and delivers the lamenters; second, the reverse movement from praise to lament (e.g., Pss 9/10, 27, 40, 41, 44, 89) perhaps the most challenging text for preaching, implies that believers' faith sometimes does not have answers and thus communicates a view of the sufferings and trials of life in spite of God's sovereignty; third, the alternation between

[102]Villanueva, "Preaching Lament" 64-84.

lament and praise (e.g., Pss 31, 35, 42, 59, and 71) conveys the theological implication that the faith journey toward restoration is a long process; the believer's life is composed of not only certainty but also uncertainty; fourth, the movement to lament even after praise (e.g., Ps 12) may imply that although believers have already experienced God's answer and deliverance, their lives of faith still have ambiguity and the element of tension; finally, the absence of movement (e.g., Pss 38, 88, 120, 123, 137) can have an important theological implication that faith does not always resolve life's problems.[103]

In fact, from a theological perspective, examination of particular structural/emotional movements of a given lament psalm provides the interpreter a different theological implication in dealing with the tension between faith-situations and life-situations within a covenantal framework. At the same time, from the communicational perspective, it provides the interpreter a communicational channel that brings different impacts upon the reader.

Organizing the Theological/Doctrinal Ideas with the Timeless Implication and Impact of Genre Characteristics

Once the interpreter has developed the theological/doctrinal ideas and has discerned the timeless theological implication and communicational impact from the genre characteristics of a given lament psalm, the final step in the theological process is the organizing process. According to Warren, this organizing process is to state "the exegetical outline and proposition in logical order."[104] He explains that the organizing

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[103] Ibid., 75-79. See also Walter Bruggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 78.

[104]Warren, "The Theological Process," 351.

process may need to modify the flow of the text in the theological outline, "moving from textual structure to logical, psychological flow."[105]

If the purpose of the theological process is to identify and communicate the cognitive meaning of the lament psalm, Warren's explanation of the organizing process seems to be pertinent, including the modification of textual order. However, if we consider the broader purposes of the theological process mentioned above,[106] Warren's explanation needs to be revised, because his approach may lose the author's intended timeless theological implication and communicational impact, which is embedded in the textual medium and mood and replace it with the preacher's preference. Consequently, in order for the faithful communication of the lament psalms to the contemporary audience, the interpreter must also consider how to reflect each theological implication and communicational impact of a given lament psalm into the theological/homiletical outline along with its theological/doctrinal ideas.[107]

The first step the interpreter should take in the organizing process is to enlist the theological/doctrinal ideas, following the flow of the text. In this way, the interpreter can assure that these theological/doctrinal propositions are the focus of the theological/homiletical outline. Without doubt, the primary purpose of preaching the

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[105]Ibid., 337-38.

[106]The broader purpose of the theological process in this chapter is to communicate the timeless meaning and impact of the text. In line with this purpose, the interpreter must develop the theological/doctrinal ideas and discern the theological implication and communicational impact from the genre characteristic of the text.

[107]Warren distinguishes the theological outline from the homiletical outline in the sermon-making process. However, if the textual-faithful preacher wants to preserve the theological implication and communicational impact conveyed through genre textual components (the medium and mood of the text), the theological outline in the theological process cannot be much different from the homiletical one because the preacher basically should reflect the structural/emotional movements of the text into these outlines.

lament psalm is the communication of timeless biblical truths. In addition, it is important for the interpreter to maintain the unity of the theological/homiletical outline not only to encapsulate the textual message but also to reflect the timeless theological implication and communicational impact, without losing the central points of the theological/homiletical outline in the whole organizing process.

The next step is to reflect the timeless implication and impact of genre characteristics into the theological/homiletical outline. While maintaining clarity and unity by placing the theological/doctrinal ideas in the theological/homiletical outline, the interpreter needs to preserve the genre characteristics of the text by inserting its theological implication into the flow of the theological/homiletical outline, giving heed to the textual movements.[108] By doing this, the theological focus, that is, the theological/doctrinal ideas of a lament psalm, can be communicated in a way that respects the text's genre characteristics rather than imposing it in a fashion foreign to that text.

One may question the common or universal adaptability of textual elements and movements as timeless principles into theological/homiletical outline. In fact, in each lament psalm, the author expresses truths about transcendent attributes and actions of God (faith-situations) and typical humanity (life-situations) interacting with God's immutable and transcendent ways through the structural/emotional elements and movements of the text. Thus, the genre characteristics of a lament provide natural,

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[108]For instance, in case of Ps 12, the theological implication of genre characteristic can be "believers can be experience suffering even after God's deliverance." In organizing process, the interpreter should enlist this implication after other theological/doctrinal propositions, because the text itself shows its structural/emotional movements at the end.

timeless concepts and empathy based upon both God's unchanging character and action and the mutual reality of life-situations presented in the text and contemporary life. In this vein, Bullock asserts that the paradigmatic method for textual emotions and movements is appropriate for interpreting psalms when they faithfully follow the historical-grammatical interpretation of the text and it is also appropriate for reapplication of this method for the Christian life.[109] Bruggemann also perceives that the human emotions and experiences in the lament psalms represent universal human experience based upon divine-human relationship.[110] Perhaps the fundamental reason for using the lamenter's emotions and experiences as a paradigm for measuring and understanding human commonality lies in the fact that the lamenter's emotions and experiences are typical emotional responses to the timeless theological/doctrinal truths of God's unchanging attributes and activities.

The point is that since there can be dynamic movements in lament psalms that produce different timeless theological implications and communicational impacts, the interpreter should not ignore preserving these theological implications and communicational impact embedded in the textual elements and movements. By doing this, the interpreter can reflect the theological implications and thus incorporate the communicational impact into the theological/homiletical outline, without neglecting the timeless principles of the textual meaning and textual impact.

In short, the interpreter should discern and follow the unique genre

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[109]Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 46. Bullock points out that Calvin's interpretive method employed this paradigmatic method for the textual emotions.

[110]Walter Bruggemann, "Psalms and the Life of Faith: A Suggested Typology of Function," *JSOT* 17 (1980): 3-32.

characteristics of the text as a guide in reflecting the textual message and impact in the organizing process.[111] In this way, the interpreter can organize a theological/homiletical outline that faithfully conveys both the theological proposition of a given lament psalm and its unique theological implication and communicational impact to the contemporary audience.

Establishing Genre-Sensitive Theological Findings

The primary purpose of the theological process is to help the interpreter develop the timeless theological truths, the theological/doctrinal ideas of a given lament psalm, which can be transferred to the contemporary audience with biblical authority and relevancy. However, the genre sensitive theological process does not stop here. It requires the interpreter to investigate the distinguishing genre characteristics of a given lament psalm, which is a part of the relevance of biblical communication. In addition, this holistic theological process requires the interpreter to organize a theological/homiletical outline that can reflect the textual meaning and regenerate the textual impact through the theological/doctrinal ideas, a unique theological implication, and communicational impact.

When following the above procedure, the interpreter can establish three theological findings. He can first articulate the most important theological findings—the timeless theological truths, the theological/doctrinal ideas of a psalm. In concretizing the timeless theological/doctrinal truths, the interpreter can also determine another

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[111]Quoting George Steiner's words, Long argues that "any separation between a theological experiencing of biblical texts and a literary [genre] understanding of them is 'radically factitious.'" Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms*, 135.

theological finding, the timeless theological implication and communicational impact, by investigating the genre characteristics (the textual elements and movements) with the aim of honoring the relevance of biblical communication. The final finding of this holistic theological process is a theological outline or structure which can contain the previous theological products, reflecting the theological message and communication impact derived from the text.

A genre-honoring theological process for a lament psalm requires the interpreter to pay close attention to its genre components (the purpose, message, medium and mood) throughout the whole theological process. Based upon the transcendent and recurring context and purpose, a holistic theological process includes theological investigation into the message of the text (the theological/doctrinal ideas) and an actual examination of the medium and mood of the text (a distinguishing theological implication and communicational impact). Such a holistic theological process can be useful in overcoming the hermeneutical reduction that hinders transmission of the author-intended messages and impacts. For a text-honoring preacher, this holistic theological process enables the interpreter to have a deeper sensitivity to the genre characteristic, theological implication and communicational impact of a lament psalm and helps him communicate the theological message and impact, being more faithful to the text with its holistic theological process and its findings.

CHAPTER 4

A GENRE-SENSITIVE HOMILETICAL PROCESS FOR PREACHING A LAMENT PSALM

Introduction

The primary goal of this chapter is to establish a genre-sensitive homiletical process for preaching a lament psalm. This process begins with a holistic homiletical method that reflects the genre-based contextual feature (the purpose of the text) and the genre-based textual essentials (the message, medium, and mood of the text) in the formation of the basic homiletical framework (the homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood) and actual sermon parts (explanation, illustration, application, transition, conclusion, and introduction). This section emphasizes the importance of formulating the homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood as the basic framework for genre-sensitive expository preaching of a lament psalm, and also examines their holistic and organic integration in order to make genre-sensitive sermon parts accord with the interlocking nature of genre-based essentials.

This chapter delineates a step-by-step procedure for a holistic homiletical method of lament psalms that reflect the genre-based contextual and textual essentials into the basic homiletical framework and actual sermon part. This process is composed of four steps: identifying a genre-sensitive homiletical purpose; formulating the genre-sensitive homiletical message, medium, and mood; crafting genre-sensitive sermon parts; and establishing genre-sensitive homiletical findings.

The Necessity of a Holistic Homiletical Method for Lament Psalms

The homiletical process cannot be mechanical only; rather, it must also be organic. It does not proceed through strictly sequential steps, but goes with holistic and organic associations with several steps. A complete sermon is not the result of the mechanical combination of sermonic elements or materials, but the holistic and organic integration of them.

A complete sermon is usually composed of three basic movements (introduction, body, and conclusion); these three movements thoroughly integrate several actual compositional elements such as explanation, illustration, application, and transition.[1] There is no fixed formula as to how these homiletical components are to be woven into the sermon or how much time should be devoted to each. However, a text-honoring preacher does not determine or utilize these homiletical components at his discretion. Rather, he must first discern the basic homiletical framework in reference to the text—the purpose, ideas, and form of the sermon. Based upon this basic compositional framework, the preacher determines and develops the actual compositional parts of the sermon—explanation, illustration, application, transition, introduction, and conclusion.

The genre-sensitive homiletical process for preaching a lament psalm, however, requires the preacher to pay more careful attention to the interlocking nature of

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[1]Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 101-99; Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 101-266; Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit* (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 173-226; Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance* (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 101-94; Wayne McDill, *12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: B&H, 2006, 115-64; Donald R. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 87-255; and Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 95-128.

genre essentials, as it makes the steps for formulating all the homiletical components not independently self-sufficient steps but thoroughly integrated and mutually influencing ones. Thus, in accordance with the interlocking nature of genre-based essentials, when composing a sermon, a genre-sensitive preacher must reflect the genre-based contextual feature (the purpose of the text) and the genre-based textual essentials (the message, medium, and mood of the text) into formulating the basic homiletical framework (the homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood) that also influences formulating actual compositional parts of the sermon. In this section, I propose that genre-sensitive preaching of a lament psalm necessitates a holistic homiletical process in which the preacher must reflect the genre-essentials into the basic homiletical framework and actual sermon parts.

The Homiletical Purpose: The Brain of the Homiletical Process

Preaching is not about information alone, but about information that brings the transformation of life.[2] God's design for the lament psalms is not merely information, but transformation—molding his people's beliefs and behaviors. In particular, the primary function of lament psalms is not to reveal new truths about God, but to demonstrate responses to God's earlier revelations.[3] The emotional and volitional responses of the lament psalms, along with the everlasting truths about God, are also inspired.[4] Accordingly, regardless of time and space, the lament psalms intend not only to deliver

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[2]O. C. Edwards Jr., *Elements of Homiletic* (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1982), 63.

[3]Ronald B. Allen, *And I Will Praise Him* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1992), 95.

[4]Ibid.

the truth of God to the audience, but also to demand the audience's emotional and volitional responses through the text. In this respect, the purpose of preaching a lament psalm is not just to communicate intellectual ideas, but also to persuade the audience to respond and act as the text guides. Thus, the ultimate goal of preaching a lament psalm is "to see God change the lives of our listeners by the Word that is preached."[5]

To be persuasive, a sermon based on a lament psalm must represent effective communication. Admittedly, many factors go into effective communication. Effective and persuasive preaching of a lament should provoke within the audience the same understanding of and empathy with the text.[6] Thus, a good preacher must accurately explain what the text meant and means, and must demonstrate that meaning's validity, seeking the audience's response congruent with the text. In this sense, when the sermon's message and purpose are harmonious with the textual meaning and purpose, the preacher can effectively persuade the audience through that sermon.

To share the same understanding of and response to a lament psalm with the audience, the preacher must first articulate a clear homiletical purpose on the basis of the textual purpose and meaning. In fact, the theological findings that have built a bridge from the ancient text to the contemporary situation can make it possible to cultivate the audience's appropriate understanding and response. However, the preacher needs to analyze his immediate audience in order to confirm whether the textual purpose and

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[5]York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 17.

[6]Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 29-47; and Timothy J. Ralston, "Preaching the Psalms: Sermonic Forms," in *Interpreting the Psalms for Teaching & Preaching*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman IV and D. Brent Sandy (St. Louis: Chalice, 2010), 33.

meaning is compatible with the specific needs of his audience.[7] The preacher's audience analysis in the homiletical process is essential for determining the relevant and specific homiletical purpose.[8] The purpose of the lament psalm affects the preacher's sermonic purpose, as it should affect the audience.

The preacher's audience analysis does not start in the homiletical process, but is already involved in determining a preaching unit, a process that is necessarily associated with determining the purpose of the sermon.[9] In this sense, in order to preach a lament psalm effectively and persuasively, the preacher must select the text that comes closest to meeting the needs of the audience determined through audience analysis.[10] Obviously, if the preacher expounds the psalms in a consecutive way, exegeting the text should be followed by exegeting the audience. However, adhering to the dictum "from the text to the congregation," without exegeting the immediate audience, seems too mechanical, ineffective, and even confined. Although a text-faithful preacher must adhere to the hermeneutical direction from the text to the congregation for the sake of the sound interpretation, an audience-minded preacher does not neglect the fact that he must approach the text in pursuit of God's answer for the life of the congregation (the text for the congregation) and thus proclaim the text as God's answer for their lives (the text for

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[7]Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 77-83.

[8]Jay E. Adams, *Preaching with Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 34; and Timothy S. Warren, "A Paradigm for Preaching," *BSac* 148 (1997): 478.

[9]Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989), 79; and Peter Adam, *Speaking God's Words* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1996), 129.

[10]Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 34.

life transformation).[11] Yet, the preacher cannot impose an exegetical understanding upon the text simply to satisfy the situation of today's audience.[12] Rather, while keeping the two-way direction (from text to context and from context to text) at the same time, the preacher should take hermeneutical and pastoral responsibility: remaining faithful to God's Word with accurate understanding of the textual meaning and purpose, and connecting the text with the congregation through careful and specific audience analysis.[13] In fact, the balance between the text and context can be an important key for reflecting the unique dual nature of psalms (words to God and God's word to humanity) into sermon preparation.

In this vein, genre-sensitive preaching of a lament psalm requires formulating the homiletical purpose through specific audience analysis. On the basis of the legitimate contextual parallel between the text and the situations of the contemporary audience, the preacher can naturally make the textual purpose discovered in the exegetical/theological process compatible with the homiletical purpose. By doing this, the preacher can avoid arbitrary imposition of his own purpose into the sermon, instead allowing the text itself to guide the purpose and direction of sermon—the text-driven and genre-sensitive purpose

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[11]Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 79.

[12]In this respect, whereas Long correctly recognizes the notion of genre-sensitivity by explaining that "the sermon's task is to extend a portion of the text's impact into a new communicational situation," he creates possibilities for exegetical imposition by stating, "But because each time a text is read the circumstances of reading a different, new meanings are always emerging. Preaching does not involve determining what the text used to mean and then devising some creative way to make that meaning pertinent to the contemporary scene." Thomas G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 33-34.

[13]Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 77-83. Richard explains that the preacher needs to answer two compatibility questions: (1) Can I make an exegetical or theological case that my sermon's purpose is compatible with the purpose of the text? and (2) Can I make a sociological or psychological case that my sermon's purpose is compatible with the needs of my audience?

of the sermon.

In practice, when formulating a homiletical purpose, the preacher must pay careful attention not to project his own purpose or the secondary or minor purpose of the text into the primary homiletical purpose. Since it is possible for the biblical preacher to preach on the text's secondary purposes,[14] expository preachers can have as many nuanced sermons as the theological/doctrinal propositions permit.[15] However, one of the important principles of genre-sensitive preaching of a lament psalm is to reflect the biblical author's intended multiple and prioritized textual purposes of the text in the homiletical purposes. The psalmist's thoughts, emotions, and volitions are holistically held in a lament psalm.[16] The text itself shows mixed and prioritized communicational channels or directions to the intellectual, emotion, and volitional responses that the psalmist has already expressed tangibly. Accordingly, the preacher must reflect the multiple and prioritized communicative directions of the text into the homiletical purposes so that such text-driven and genre-sensitive purposes can guide the entire homiletical process.

In this sense, the step for formulating the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose of a lament psalm cannot end by discerning the primary purpose of the text. After discerning the multiple and prioritized directions of the text, the preacher must articulate

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[14]Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 33. In this regard, Adams explains that the preacher can preach with the sub-purpose as long as (1) there are sub-purposes in the text, (2) the preacher does so in a way that recognizes the larger purpose thrust of which it is a sub-category, and (3) the preacher does not distort the purpose or purposes of which the sub-purpose is a purpose unit.

[15]Richard, *Preparing Expository Preaching*, 81.

[16]Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 75-85.

them as the major and minor homiletical purposes. Only after discerning these multiple and prioritized homiletical purposes in accordance with the preeminence of textual purposes can the preacher properly reflect what the text says (the focus of the text, i.e., its message) and how it says it (the force of the text, i.e., its medium and mood) into the sermon in order to reproduce what the text does (the purpose of the text) in the sermon. Thus, the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose, functioning as the 'brain' of the whole sermon-making process,[17] can control or directly influence the formulation of the homiletical message, medium, and mood in order to produce an effective and persuasive sermon that appeals to the audience's intellectual, emotional, volitional, and behavior domains,[18] while honoring the relevance of the biblical communication.

The Homiletical Message: The Heart of the Homiletical Process

The lament psalms are replete with various emotional expressions, and have distinguishing genre characteristics that trigger the audience's affective and experiential engagement with the text. Thus, a genre-sensitive preacher of a lament psalm must honor this telling genre characteristic of a lament psalm by reflecting the narrative potentials and the affective and experiential quality of the lament psalms in the sermon.

Notwithstanding these innate qualities of lament psalms, the preacher should

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[17]In this dissertation, I borrow and modify Richard's metaphors of 'brain,' 'heart,' and 'skeleton' of the sermon for the basic compositional framework for a sermon in order to emphasize the organic integration in the formation of the sermon. For his seven-step method and his metaphors for each step, see Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 25.

[18]Klaus Issler and Ron Habermas, *How We Learn* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 29-31. While explaining the four taxonomies of the different types of learning—the cognitive, affective, volitional, and behavior level, Issler and Habermas explain that learning is much more holistic and interrelated and that an effective teaching [preaching] should intersect with all these domains.

not neglect their central messages, which comprise the heart of biblical communication.[19] In fact, biblical communication, being different from other communication, must prioritize delivering accurate biblical truths to the contemporary audience. Preaching a lament psalm is no exception.[20] Although a genre-sensitive preacher of a lament psalm should respect the unique genre characteristic of the text in the sermon, he should not sacrifice the clear and accurate homiletical messages by placing undue emphasis upon the emotional and experiential quality of a lament psalm.

In developing a sermon on a lament psalm, the preacher must consider the centrality of propositional truths in biblical preaching, lest he fall into the pitfall of employing 'New Homiletical' approaches that emphasize narrative preaching methodologies and the experience of the audience.[21] In particular, Eugene Lowry's homiletical plot[22] is often regarded as a suitable homiletical method for preaching a

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[19]For the centrality of the message or theme in biblical preaching, see John Henry Jowett, *The Preacher, His Life and Work: Yale Lectures* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1921), 133; John Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 44; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 35; John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 211-59; and Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 134-35.

[20]Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 186.

[21]With regard to the general explanations and assessments of the New Homiletic and its major advocates such as Fredrick Craddock, Eugene Lowry, and David Buttrick, see Richard L. Eslinger, *The Web of Preaching: New Options in Homiletical Method* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002); Mike Graves and David J. Schlafer, eds., *What's the Shape of Narrative Preaching?* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2008); Mark A. Howell, "Hermeneutical Bridges and Homiletical Methods: A Comparative Analysis of the New Homiletics and Expository Preaching Theory 1970-1995" (Ph.D. diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999); and David L. Allen, "A Tale of Two Roads: Homiletics and Biblical Authority," *JETS* 43 (2000): 508-13. For the significant critiques of narrative preaching by those who once supported it as a specific methodology of the New Homiletics, see Charles L. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Post-liberal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); James W. Thompson, *Preaching like Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); and Thomas G. Long, "What Happened to Narrative Preaching?," *Journals for Preachers 28* (2005): 9-14.

[22]Lowry's loop of five distinctive stages (upsetting the equilibrium-analyzing the discrepancy-disclosing the clue to resolution-experiencing the gospel-anticipating the consequences) is presented in his book, *The Homiletical Plot* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1980). A four-staged version of the homiletical plot (conflict-complication-sudden shirt-unfolding) is suggested in his book, Eugene Lowry, *The Sermon:*

lament psalm.[23] One might utilize Lowry's five-staged or four-staged homiletical loop, because it can match some lament psalms in terms of form.[24] A text-faithful preacher, however, should recognize the danger: the New Homiletics' undue emphasis upon the experience of the audience can sacrifice the author's intended meaning of the text and the authority of the Scripture.[25] In this respect, a text-faithful preacher who has a high view of Scripture and feels responsible for the faithful communication of the biblical truth should deal thoughtfully with the centrality of the biblical truth.

Obviously, thoughtful preachers concerned with effective communication cannot afford to ignore the contributions of the newer homiletic suggestions. Neither can they simply adopt the homiletical suggestions without evaluating and considering the sources from which they come. Consequently, while critically evaluating and accommodating the positive contributions of newer homiletic suggestions, the biblical preacher should not compromise the centrality of the author's intended message with any kind of theological relativism that transfers too much emphasis from the intent of the biblical author and the authority of the Scripture to the role of the audience. In short, unless the preacher can formulate the clear homiletical message the biblical author intended to convey in the text, the sermon, in spite of being full of the communicational

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Dancing the Edge of Mystery (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997).

[23]For instance, Robert B. Chisholm Jr. "Interpreting the Psalms: Basic Methods," in *Interpreting the Psalms for Teaching & Preaching*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman IV and D. Brent Sandy (St. Louis: Charles, 2010), 24.

[24]Since the majority of the lament psalms have the dominant structural/emotional movements from lament to praise, Lowry's homiletical plot can be regarded as a fitting sermon form for them. Yet, since the texts show a variety of structural/emotional movements, standardized application of Lowry's homiletical plot cannot rightfully reflect the form of the text into the sermon.

[25]Campbell, *Preaching Jesus*, 142; and David L. Larsen, *Telling the Old, Old Story: The Art of Narrative Preaching* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1995), 78.

impact/effect congruent with the text, cannot be a genre-sensitive preaching, let alone biblical preaching.

In fact, accurate preaching and genre-sensitive preaching is not an either-or issue. Preaching with genre-sensitivity is not antithetical to the accurate and faithful communication of the biblical author's intended messages.[26] Genre-sensitive preaching does not diminish the truth character of the biblical text, because the communicative characteristics of a genre do not exist for themselves, but for effective communication of the truth as the biblical author intended to be.[27] Thus, genre consideration is a necessary complement for the communication of the biblical truths, encompassing both an accurate understanding of the truths and an effective manner of communicating them.[28]

The preacher seeks a way of both keeping the centrality of the homiletical message and reflecting the genre characteristic of a lament psalm. To pursue these dual purposes, the homiletical message should include the timeless theological implications, which are developed from the textual organization (the medium and mood of the text) identified in the previous theological process.

Furthermore, when formulating this genre-sensitive homiletical message, the preacher should remember the interlocking nature of genre-essentials. In this respect, the

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[26]Robert A. Vogel, "Biblical Genres and the Text-Driven Sermon," in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned Matthews (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 169-70.

[27]Steve Stanley has rightly acknowledged that a proper outline of Hebrews should take into consideration rhetorical aspects and content as well as the literary genre, with the understanding that content is critical in determining the literary structure. Steve Stanley, "The Structure of Hebrews from Three Perspectives," *TynBul* 45 (1994): 245-71.

[28]Vogel, "Biblical Genres," 170.

chronological order in the homiletical process is critical.[29] Formulating the homiletical messages should precede formulating the homiletical medium and mood. After formulating the homiletical messages under the guidance of the genre-sensitive homiletical purposes, the preacher can advance to formulating the homiletical medium and mood, considering how they can operate together to accomplish the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose. In this way, the steps for formulating the basic compositional framework (the message, medium, and mood of the sermon) and the actual compositional sermon parts must not be independent, but mutually influencing throughout the homiletical process. In short, when the preacher develops the genre-sensitive homiletical messages that include the timeless theological implications of the genre characteristics in accordance with the interlocking nature of genre essentials, such homiletical messages can function as the 'heart' of the genre-sensitive homiletical process for a lament psalm.

The Homiletical Medium: The Skeleton of the Homiletical Process

As Stott says, "the golden rule for sermon outline is that each text must be allowed to supply its own structure."[30] While emphasizing the importance of exposition of rather than imposition into the text, Kaiser also underlines the importance of reflecting the textual structure into a sermon. He states,

It is hoped that God's men and women will be challenged to reread that very same

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[29]W. Floyd Bresee, "Emotion in Preaching," *Ministry* (March 1984): 8. Bresee states, "in balancing logic and emotion, chronology is critical. Logic should come first, emotion second." He also states that the preacher who begins by leading his audience into careful thinking finds that thinking can naturally lead to feeling. Lewis concurs by saying, "intellectual materials must precede and form the basis for emotional appeals." Ralph L. Lewis, *Persuasive Preaching Today* (Wilmore, KY: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1979), 158.

[30]Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 229.

> Biblical text on their own soon after they have heard the message. Even if they cannot recall the outline (they probably will not—sorry!), the Word of Scripture will still speak to them because they have thought through its structure and shape in such a way as to have divinely met God in that text.[31]

While acknowledging that the textual structure must be reflected in the sermon, genre-sensitive preaching further insists that the preacher must honor the structure of the text in formulating the sermon form in order to deliver the author's intended meaning and effect in the manner that the biblical communication does.[32]

The relationship between the content and form of the sermon has been an important issue in recent homiletical discussion. Although there is rich variety of forms, the primary purpose of a sermon's form in traditional preaching is to communicate a central idea or thesis, emphasizing its clarity and rationality. [33] However, since the 1970s the New Homiletics' emphasis upon biblical narrative and various sermonic forms has drawn preachers' attention to the important roles of sermon forms for effective communication of biblical truth.[34] As a result, a preacher has been challeged to take account of how he says what he says. Thus, as Daniel Akin aptly summarizes, "The most important thing about any message is what you say, but how you say it has never been more important."[35]

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[31]Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 160.

[32]Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 97. Adam states that "if the Bible is God preaching, then our preaching should echo and resonate with His communication and His communicational method. . . . Our preaching should convey, not reduce, the intellectual meanings and emotional impacts of the text."

[33]Dennis M. Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 21.

[34]Ibid., 25-44. See also O. Wesley Allen Jr. *Determining the Form* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 4.

[35]David L. Allen, "Introduction," in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned Matthews (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 7.

Despite recognition of the important roles of sermon form for effective communication, many contemporary expository preachers still lack interest in reflecting the textual structures into their sermons, while focusing on communicating the biblical contents. With regard to these preachers, whom he calls "teacher preachers," Michael Quicke writes:

> Such preachers stay close to the text and explain its meaning deductively. Typically doctrinal and instructional, this preaching examines verses in logical order. Some examples of teacher preachers are John Stott, John Ortberg, Timothy Keller, Jack Hayford, and John MacArthur. Often cerebral in style, teacher preachers want to get information across. A sermon form often used by teacher preachers is verse-by-verse preaching.[36]

However, some expository homileticians generally agree with the notion that the textual structure should be reflected into the sermon, and thus implant their notion into their homiletical methodologies. However, their methodologies often do not fully concretize their notion in determining the sermon structure without genre-sensitivity.[37]

For instance, Haddon Robinson's definition of biblical preaching takes for granted the preacher's analyses of genre characteristics of the text in the exegetical process.[38] However, in the homiletical process, he asserts that any kind of form can be available for communicating the biblical truth.[39] In other words, for Robinson, the textual structure as one genre-essential is mainly associated with discovering the big idea of the text in exegesis, yet it can be, in practice, discarded in the design phase of the sermon.

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[36]Michael Quicke, "History of Preaching: Assessing Today's Preaching in Light of History," in *The Art & Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today's Communication*, ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brain Larson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 64.

[37]Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching*, 27-28.

[38]Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 21, 61.

[39]Ibid., 131.

For Robinson, the sermonic form can ultimately be dependent upon the preacher's decision for making effective and relevant communication for the contemporary audience, rather than the preacher's conviction to honor the relevance of the biblical communication.

In fact, if the preacher mainly focuses on communicating the accurate content of the biblical truth, the preacher has various options for determining the sermon form to convey the truth. However, if the preacher considers not only the *content* but also the *communicational force and impact* of the text, then he will see that not all sermon forms are appropriate for communicating both of them.[40] In particular, a genre-sensitive preacher of a lament psalm believes the psalmist's choice of the structural/emotional elements and movements has intended theological implications and communicational impact. Thus, he seeks to communicate both the content and the impact of the text.

In this sense, a genre-sensitive preacher who has the conviction that the textual structure is the biblical author's intended design for attaining his intended communicational purpose and effect must start with the text structure in formulating the homiletical medium. The textual content and form operate together to accomplish the communicational purpose and impact of the text. Thus, in order to accomplish the homiletical purpose with the homiletical message, the preacher must formulate the homiletical structure, remodeling the textual structure. The preacher must discover the biblical author's communicational or rhetorical strategy embedded in the textual structure

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[40]David L. Allen, "Preparing a Text-Driven Sermon," in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned Matthews (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 104. Allen states that "ultimately, sermon form should be dictated by theology. What one believes about the nature and sufficiency of Scripture will largely determine how sermons are structured." See also Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching*, 55-56.

and allow it to function as a map or matrix in determining the homiletical medium.

To be specific, in accordance with the interrelatedness of genre-based essentials, the preacher should make the homiletical medium (the sermonic structure) congruent with the textual structure in a genre-sensitive holistic homiletical process; he should formulate the homiletical purpose and message of a lament psalm congruent with the textual purpose and meaning. In particular, a genre-sensitive preacher of a lament psalm should see the formal/functional elements and their arrangements of the text as the biblical author's unique yet transcendent design for his intended communicational purpose and impact/effect. Since the preacher has discerned the timeless communicational strategy from the formal/functional elements and movements through the theological process, the preacher must reflect them in designing the sermon structure. Furthermore, the step for formulating the homiletical medium is dependent upon formulating other homiletical components for the sermon from a lament psalm. This process organically and artistically engages with determining the placement, amount, and quality of the actual sermon parts in order to regenerate the textual impact in the sermon. By doing so, a genre-sensitive preachers' exegetical finding of the textual organization does not end in itself, but holistically influences the entire homiletical process. In this sense, the homiletical medium functions as the "skeleton" of the homiletical process.

In short, reflecting the textual structure in the sermon structure is not merely a methodological issue. It is essentially involved in the preacher's theological conviction about Scripture. Formulating the homiletical medium in genre-sensitive preaching begins with the preacher's conviction that the text itself should be the starting point and governing rule for determining the homiletical medium in pursuit of the biblical author's

intended purpose and impact. In this way, the text is not merely a resource for preaching, but also the source for preaching—text-driven preaching.[41] Based upon this conviction, a genre-sensitive preacher can remodel the timeless communicational strategy embedded in the text when formulating the sermon form in pursuit of faithful and effective communication of the biblical truth with its impact.

The Homiletical Mood: The Muscle of the Homiletical Process

Elizabeth Achtemeier states, "Because the story of God's salvation of humankind is presented to us through the heart-stirring genres of the Bible, it therefore follows that if we are to proclaim that story, we should to do in words and forms that will produce the same telling effects."[42] In order to preach a lament psalm with the same telling effects, the preacher must give attention to what to preach and how to preach it, which must be a reflection of the biblical author's intent actualized in the text. In particular, for preaching a lament psalm, the mood of the text is the most unique and distinguishing genre-based textual element. Thus, the preacher who wants to preach a lament psalm in a genre-sensitive manner must pursue what the psalmist communicates with the same pathos with which the psalmist says it.

In line with the necessity of emotional exegesis, many homileticians also recognize the importance of using the emotional dimension of the text in the sermon. Noting that "one dare not divorce it [emotion] from biblical content and sound

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[41]Allen, "Preparing a Text-Driven Sermon," 106. See also Steven W. Smith, *Dying to Preach* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009), 65. Smith enunciates three components in text-driven preaching that should be guided by the text— the "substance," "structure," and "spirit" of the text.

[42]Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Creative Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 46.

application," York supports the use of emotion from the text, stating "a failure to preach the emotional content of the text is as much an abdication of expository responsibility as failure to preach the theological content."[43] Adam Dooley and Jerry Vines concur with York,

> Unfortunately, too many preachers fail to realize that pathos in preaching is more than a passionate presentation of truth. Although energy is important for effective sermon delivery, the preacher is not free to impose his own emotional design to the message he proclaims. To the contrary, pathos that does not correspond to the emotive mood of the biblical author is dangerously manipulative. Just as we are not free to tamper with the inspired logos of the Bible, neither we are at liberty to alter its pathos.[44]

Robinson also mentions that "every passage in Scripture carries a mood that reflects the author's feelings, the feelings of God who prompt the text, and/or the emotions felt by the original recipients." Accordingly, he asserts that "exegesis and hermeneutics should be reflected in the sermon's mood."[45] Specifically, he avers that since a main idea and a dominant mood are in the text, effective expository preachers should be faithful to the mood of the text and make that dominant mood of the text the mood of the sermon as well.[46] Chapell explicitly mentions that "because we convey meaning not merely by what we say but also by how we speak, accurate exposition

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[43]Hershael W. York, "Communication Theory and Text-Driven Preaching," in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned L. Mathews (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 241. See also York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 14.

[44]Adam B. Dooley and Jerry Vines, "Delivering a Text-Driven Sermon," in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned L. Mathews (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 247.

[45]Haddon W. Robinson, "Homiletics and Hermeneutics," in *Making a Difference in Preaching*, ed. Scott M. Gibson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 71-72.

[46]Haddon W. Robinson, "The Relevance of Expository Preaching," in *Preaching to a Shifting Culture: 12 Perspectives on Communicating That Connects*, ed. Scott M. Gibson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 92.

requires a preacher to reflect a text's tone as well as define its terms."[47] Long also asserts that one way preachers honor the non-cognitive concerns of the preaching portion is by allowing the mood of the text to set the mood of the sermon. He thus writes, "Biblical texts impart more than feelings, of course, but part of the rhetorical impact of a text, and thus meaning, has to do with the emotional mood it creates."[48] Liefeld encourages the preacher to draw the emotional dimension in preaching from Scripture itself as part of exposition.[49] Mike Graves specifically appeals for "form sensitive preaching" in compliance with the textual movement and mood.[50] In short, if it is important to incorporate the textual mood into the sermon in any biblical genre, it is much more important for preaching a lament psalm, because mood is the most distinguishing genre characteristic of a lament psalm.

In practice, when reflecting the textual mood in the sermon of a lament psalm, the preacher first bears in mind that formulating the homiletical mood is not independent of formulating other homiletical components due to the interrelatedness of genre-based essentials. In fact, incorporating the textual mood into the sermonic mood should be controlled by the homiletical purpose as well as the clear message of the sermon. Furthermore, the textual structure should be reflected by the sermonic structure. In this sense, as mentioned elsewhere, the order is critical, because the homiletical purpose and message should be the bases for determining and developing the medium and mood of

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[47]Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 99.

[48]Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms*, 134.

[49]Walter L. Liefeld, *New Testament Exposition: From Text to Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 87.

[50]Mike Graves, *The Sermon as Symphony* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1997), 15-25.

the sermon. Thus, in order to preach a lament psalm with genre-sensitivity, the preacher must reflect the textual mood as the biblical author's part of communicational intent into the homiletical mood, considering how the homiletical mood can operate with the homiletical message to accomplish the homiletical purpose.

To be specific, in order to respect the distinguishing emotional aspects of a lament psalm, the preacher should first consider the emotional movements of the text discovered in the exegetical process. In this regard, the general five patterns of the lament psalms will be helpful guidelines for determining the emotional movement of a chosen text.[51] While considering the emotional movements of the text, the preacher must create a similar emotional arch in the sermonic mood.[52] Furthermore, in accordance with the interlocking nature of genre-based essentials and their organic integration, the process of reflecting the textual mood into the sermon also influences the determination of other sermon parts (explanation, illustration, application, transition, and even uses of language). In this way, the textual mood can be reflected not only in the dominant sermon mood but also in the detailed sermon parts in conjunction with the homiletical message, medium, and purpose. In short, when the textual pathos is properly incorporated into the sermon by creating the emotional arch and details of the sermon, the homiletical mood functions as the 'muscle' of the homiletical process that vitalizes the homiletical purpose, connecting and operating with the homiletical message and medium.

In summary, genre-sensitive preaching of a lament psalm honors the conceptual

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[51]See Table A3 in Appendix 3.

[52]David L. Larsen, *The Anatomy of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1989), 70-71; Jeffrey D. Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 53-54; and Federico G. Villanueva, "Preaching Lament," in *Reclaiming the Old Testament for Christian Preaching*, ed. Grenville J. R. Kent,

and communicational pattern in the text and thus remodels it in the homiletical process. This process emphasizes the reflection of the genre essentials (the purpose, message, medium, and mood of the text) when formulating the basic and actual homiletical components and their organic integrations. Just as the preacher analyzes the genre essentials and genre characteristics of the text based upon their interlocking nature in the previous exegetical and theological process, he also needs to formulate a complete sermon, based upon the interrelatedness of the homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood.

One might suggest that remodeling the genre essentials of the text into the homiletical components might provide a prison for the preacher by restricting both the variety of the sermon and the creativity or imagination of the preacher.[53] However, it is quite the opposite. The text itself provides various communicative means because the lament psalms themselves are expressed in various structural/emotional elements and movements. Furthermore, communicational sensitivity is a useful tool for faithful communication of the meaning and impact of the text; it provides the textual guidance or boundary within which the preacher can legitimately exercise his own creativity and imagination. In this sense, the holistic homiletical method seeks to honor the authority of the biblical communication by allowing the text to govern the entire sermon-making process. At the same time, the holistic homiletical process honors the relevance and effectiveness of God's communication by reflecting genre-essentials, especially different

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Paul J. Kissling, and Laurence A. Turner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 64-84.

[53]Michael J. Quicke, *360 Degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Listening the Word* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 146.

structural/emotional elements and movements of the lament psalms, into the sermon-making process.

Ultimately, by both faithfully reflecting the genre essentials and considering their interlocking nature within the homiletical process, this genre-sensitive homiletical process can be a text-driven method by which the preacher confidently allows the textual purpose, message, medium, and mood to regulate the entire sermon-making process. Thus, the preacher can clearly demonstrate that it is the text itself rather than the preacher's ability that ultimately transforms the audience.

The Procedure for a Holistic Homiletical Method for Lament Psalms

In the previous section, I argued that preaching a lament psalm with genre-sensitivity requires a holistic homiletical method that can reflect the genre-based essentials of the text into the sermon by formulating the basic and actual homiletical components in the homiletical process. In this section, I will explain how a holistic homiletical method can be practiced in formulating the basic compositional framework (the homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood) and other actual sermon parts. As mentioned before, the actual homiletical process does not follow rigid sequences, for it is not a mechanical but organic and artistic integration. To supply practical and effective guidelines for a genre-sensitive homiletical process for lament psalms, I propose a set of operational procedures for this holistic homiletical method.

Formulating Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Purpose

After finishing the exegetical/theological processes, the preacher makes an actual sermon in the homiletical process. The exegetical process focused on discovering

the exegetical ideas, textual purpose, and textual organizations in the ancient historical context. The theological process concentrated on developing the timeless and universal theological/doctrinal propositions from the exegetical ideas. The preacher then discerned timeless and transcultural theological implications and communicational impacts from textual organizations, considering genre characteristics in the transcendent or trans-cultural contexts. The homiletical process, however, deliberates on homiletical efforts to make a complete sermon for the contemporary audience in particular and specific contexts.[54]

Analyzing the immediate audience. In the homiletical process, the primary concern the preacher must always attend to is his immediate audience and their contexts. Generally speaking, the preacher must find the author's intended meaning of the text and then deliver the meaning and significance of the text to the immediate audience, while moving from the text to the congregation. However, as mentioned in the previous section, for the persuasive and effective preaching of a lament psalm, audience analysis often starts with determining a lament psalm as a preaching unit even before the exegetical process. Thus, for making a text-faithful and audience-relevant sermon, the preacher needs to consider both directions—from the text to congregation and from congregation to the text.

Whether it is a successive or occasional sermon, the preacher's audience analysis is essential for detecting a specific and concrete homiletical purpose in the

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[54]Warren, "A Paradigm of Preaching," 478.

homiletical process.[55] As mentioned before, when formulating the specific purpose of the sermon, the preacher first has the responsibility for being faithful to the textual purpose and meaning discovered in the exegetical process. Thus, a text-honoring and genre-sensitive preacher must consider the textual or theological/doctrinal propositions and textual purposes for developing the specific homiletical purpose. As Adams states, "whenever preachers depart from the purpose and the intent of a biblical portion, to that extent they lose their authority to preach."[56] At the same time, the preacher also has the pastoral responsibility for meeting the needs of the immediate congregation.[57] Although it is important to consider textual purpose and meaning, the primary consideration in the homiletical process is the immediate audience. In this regard, a genre-sensitive preacher must match the text with congregational needs and contexts so that he can create sermons that are relevant from beginning to end.[58] In this way, the specific homiletical purpose the preacher develops in the homiletical process can be compatible with both the textual meaning and purpose, and the congregational needs and contexts.

Concerning the areas of audience analysis for the lament psalms, the actual analysis of the immediate audience for preaching a lament psalm is not much different from that used when preaching other genres. The preacher needs to analyze both individual life-experiential contexts and communal contexts of the congregation, and he also needs to recognize their cognitive, emotional, volitional, and behavioral patterns as

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[55]Ibid., 478-79.

[56]Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 19

[57]Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 79.

[58]Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 281.

much as possible.[59]

A more important aspect of audience analysis in preaching a lament psalm is the essential contextual dimension—the theological context of the congregation. While analyzing a particular situation of the congregation, the preacher needs to see the conflict between life and belief. In fact, the fundamental reason for choosing a lament psalm for preaching lies in the theological contexts such as social or relational conflicts, unjust criticism, diseases, and even death shared between the text and the contemporary congregation. Discovering this theological connection between the text and the contemporary audience is the hub for situational, emotional, and experiential links between them.[60] Consequently, based upon this same theological context and connection (the tension between life and belief), the preacher can develop the specific homiletical purpose, following the psalmist's intended multiple and prioritized directions—cognitive, emotional, and volitional responses. When the preacher can discern the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose compatible with both the text's primary and secondary purposes and the congregational needs via specific audience analysis, such homiletical purposes function as the brain, guiding and controlling the homiletical process.

Articulating genre-sensitive homiletical purposes. Once the preacher isolates the specific homiletical purpose congruent with both the textual purpose and the

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[59]For a discussion of detailed audience analysis as the task of contextualization, see David Hesselgrave and Edwards Rommen, *Contextualization* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989). They provide helpful a grid for communicating Christian gospel in a culturally relevant way that includes seven deminsions such as (1) worldviews, (2) cognitive processes, (3) linguistic forms, (4) behavioral patterns, (5) communication media, (6) social structure, and (7) motivational sources. See also Bruce J. Nicholls, *Contextualization* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 37-52.

[60]McDill, *12 Essential Skills*, 86-89.

congregational needs, he needs to articulate it. As mentioned elsewhere, a clear description of the homiletical purpose allows the preacher to see what the sermon ultimately accomplishes for the congregations and how it does so.[61]

Obviously, every sermon must have a clear purpose. The primary purposes of sermons vary according to the text's purpose—informing, encouraging, comforting, rebuking, and challenging to change behaviors. In this respect, the primary purpose of preaching a lament psalm generally seeks to encourage and strengthen the congregation in difficult times. Thus, the congregation's affective domain can be the major target of the sermon.

However, a genre-sensitive preacher should not stop at articulating the primary purpose of the sermon. While having a clear major objective (in case of lament psalms, the affective aim), the preacher also needs sub-purposes or communicational channels in order to attain the primary objective.[62] In this regard, the preacher must ask three developmental questions as to how the sermonic theological ideas are involved in the primary or secondary realms of the contemporary audience's understanding, belief, and behavior.[63] While asking these questions, the primary purpose of the sermon is determined by the realm with which the exegetical/theological ideas are mostly associated; the other realms become sub-purposes of the sermon.[64] Consequently,

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[61]Ronbinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 109.

[62]McDill, *12 Essential Skills*, 95; and Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 23-26.

[63]Robinson enunciates these three developmental questions; (1) what does this mean? (2) is it true? and (3) what difference does it make? Concerning the value and roles of these three developmental questions, see Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 77-96; Snukijan, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 87-127; McDill, *12 Essential Skills*, 124-36; and Warren, "A Paradigm for Preaching," 479.

[64]Robinson explains that these three developmental questions are interrelated and thus the

although the primary purpose of preaching a lament psalm centers on the affective domain, the sermon must have multiple or mixed persuasive channels that aim for the congregation's cognitive and volitional realms. Thus, the preacher must have specific directions for using these channels in the homiletical process. In other words, in order to accomplish the primary purpose of the sermon, the preacher needs a clear statement for the primary and sub-purposes, which can guide the preacher to build a sermon, appealing to the cognitive, affective, and volitional domains of the congregation.[65]

A lament psalm itself reflects multiple communicational channels used by the biblical author including cognitive, affective, and volitional domains. In fact, when the psalmist developed theological themes in his logical or emotional structure through the text, he highlighted divine activities and attributes and also expressed his emotional and volitional responses to these divine activities and attributes. This gives indications as to how the reader should respond to his prayer.[66]

In short, based upon the legitimate contextual parallel between the text and the contemporary contexts via audience analysis, a genre-sensitive preacher can formulate multiple and prioritized homiletical purposes by faithfully reflect the textual communicational directions into the homiletical purpose. Only when the preacher has this synthesis of the homiletical purposes (the primary purposes and sub-purposes of the sermon), can he have clear directions and targets for genre-sensitive preaching, being in harmony with the biblical author's intended purpose and impact.

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preacher can deal with them in the development of the sermon. However, one of these three questions predominates and influences the purpose and form of the sermon. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 96.

[65]McDill, *12 Essential Skills*, 127.

Formulating A Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Message, Medium, and Mood

A preacher's formation of specific genre-sensitive homiletical purpose is not independent of the homiletical message, medium, and mood. Rather, a clear description of a genre-sensitive homiletical purpose controls the entire processes for developing the homiletical message, medium, and mood. But for attaining the homiletical purpose, the preacher's primary task in the chronological order is to develop the homiletical message.

Developing the homiletical message. While developing the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose of the sermon, the preacher must strive to formulate a genre-sensitive homiletical message that includes the timeless implications established in the theological process. In fact, this process is thoroughly integrated and operates with the theological/doctrinal findings (theological/doctrinal ideas and the timeless implication of the textual organization) established in the theological process and the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose. In other words, the theological/doctrinal propositions and timeless implications respectively derived from the exegetical ideas and the textual organization must influence the formulation of the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose. At the same time, the preacher can express the genre-sensitive homiletical message from the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose.

In practice, in formulating the homiletical message, the preacher must ask a following question: 'what do I have to say with the theological/doctrinal propositions derived from the text and timeless implications derived from the textual organization in

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[66]Chisholm, "Interpreting the Psalms," 21.

order to accomplish the genre-sensitive homiletical purposes?' While answering this question, the preacher can modify and integrate the theological/doctrinal ideas and the timeless implications of the textual organization into a homiletical message that can be easily delivered to the contemporary audience with a central homiletical idea and minor homiletical ideas.

In this respect, formulating the homiletical message also necessitates the stylizing process, in which the preacher transforms the theological/doctrinal propositions and timeless implications of the textual organization into contemporary and engaging homiletical ideas. In this process, the preacher needs to formulate concise and memorable expression, without distorting the meaning of the text, so that the contemporary audience can easily grasp the message.[67] Furthermore, the preacher's choice of style is also a matter of communicating the force of the Word of God to his audience.[68] Thus, a genre-sensitive preacher of a lament psalm should express the homiletical ideas with concrete, personal, vivid, graphic language in order to add emotional force to the homiletical ideas. In this regard, stylizing the homiletical ideas in a certain pattern (e.g., repetitive, symmetrical, or contrastive patterns), while considering the textual impact, adds emotional force to the homiletical ideas.

The homiletical message can have minor homiletical ideas as well as a central idea. The preacher must make the minor homiletical ideas direct the audience to a central idea. In addition, since the impact of the sermon varies according to different

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[67]Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 103-07; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 89-93; and Sunkijian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 136-41,

[68]Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 230.

arrangements of a central idea and minor homiletical ideas, the preacher should structure them for optimal impact.

Designing the homiletical medium. In sermon preparation, how to say it must follow what to say. Yet, the preacher's content is organically related to the means of delivering the content to the congregation with a view to accomplishing the homiletical purpose. Determining the sermon form in the homiletical purpose basically involves a question: 'how do I say the homiletical message in order to accomplish the homiletical purposes?' In fact, the homiletical medium is the preacher's communicational strategy for attaining the communicational purpose with the communicational substance, i.e., the homiletical message. In this sense, designing the homiletical structure basically reflects the specific communicational strategies of the preacher in light of the text, rather than duplicating the biblical author's communicational strategies with the original audience.[69]

Concerning the issues of designing the sermon form, many homileticians agree that determining the sermon form is related to developing the three main parts or movements of the sermon (introduction, body, and conclusion) separately or together. While meeting the essential qualities of the sermon form (unity, order and progress),[70] the preacher generally develops a sermon in one of three major ways (deductive, inductive, and semi-inductive), by deciding whether to place the central idea of the sermon in the introduction, in the middle, or at the end.[71] In fact, for the clear and accurate

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[69]Warren, "A Paradigm for Preaching," 481.

[70]Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 132. In this regard, Chapell enumerates several qualities for the sermon form such as unity, brevity, harmony, symmetry, progression, distinction, and culmination. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 135-42.

[71]Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 143.

communication of ideas, the preacher usually adopts a deductive approach by placing a central homiletical idea in the introduction and by explaining, proving, and applying it. To heighten the audience's sense of discovery and their experience of the truth, the preacher may instead choose an inductive pattern, placing a central idea at the end of the sermon. For topical preaching with subject-complete movement, the preacher employs a semi-inductive pattern, placing a central idea in the middle and by explaining, proving, and applying it in the remainder of the sermon.[72]

However, for genre-sensitive preaching, the preacher's genre consideration critically influences the way that he formulates the homiletical medium and mood.[73] When determining the genre-sensitive homiletical medium (the sermon form), the preacher cannot abandon or jettison the biblical author's communicational strategies. Genre-sensitive preaching does not start with the preacher's creativity and imagination in determining the structure of the sermon. Rather, a genre-sensitive preacher remodels the biblical author's communicational strategies in determining the homiletical medium, because they can still be relevant and effective in helping the audience hear the sermon with the same meaning and impact of the original text.

Perhaps the homiletical message can be accurately and persuasively delivered via a sermonic form chosen by the preacher for his contemporary audience; however, not every form will suffice to transpose the emotional quality of the text into the impact of

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[72]Concerning these major patterns of the sermonic forms, see Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* 115-35; Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 142-91; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 129-73; Geidanus, *The Modern Preacher,* 141-56; and Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching*, 116-27.

[73]Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher*, 20-22. Geidanus states that the form of the text should be carried through in the sermon. According to Greidanus, a genre is a collective category for major literary types, yet a form is a minor literary type as a part of genre. Thus, the form can be validly understood in the context of its genre. See also Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 57.

the sermon. The preacher often recognizes that accomplishing the homiletical purpose through the homiletical message is difficult to accomplish with a form or strategy different from the textual form or strategy. When preaching a lament psalm, the preacher should somehow preserve and facilitate the psalmist's strategies in order to help the audience comprehend and experience the psalmist's understanding and emotions. Accordingly, the contemporary preacher needs to design the homiletical medium in a way that helps the audience experience the impact of the text, by adapting the ancient communicational strategies.

In this respect, a genre-sensitive preacher of a lament psalm should design the homiletical medium in response to the formal/functional elements and movements actualized by the biblical author in the text. In fact, the formal/functional elements and movements of the text are the psalmist's intended conceptual and communicational strategy for making the audience holistically respond to a life situation. In other words, the medium of the text is interrelated with the message and mood of the text. Accordingly, considering these formal/functional elements and movements can help the preacher see how these three facets are developed or hold together in the text, and can also allow him to follow the psalmist's intellectual, emotional, and volitional responses to each facet. In this sense, the preacher reflects the textual structure in consideration of the textual formal/functional elements and movement into the homiletical medium, enacting the basic cognitive and communicational channel to faithfully deliver the textual content and effect and thereby enabling the contemporary audience to understand and experience the psalmist's thoughts and emotions.

When remodeling the biblical author's communicational or rhetorical

strategies, an inductive form can best fit a genre-sensitive preaching of a lament psalm because most of the lament psalms move inductively. However, this does not mean that the preacher cannot use deductive elements within an inductive form at all.[74] In fact, when the preacher effectively utilizes deductive elements, he can enhance the clarity of the homiletical message. However, the preacher's indiscreet use of deductive elements without considering the textual impact can hinder the development of the audience's emotional empathy in preaching a lament psalm. In this sense, the preacher can utilize deductive elements as long as they do not distort the overall inductive pattern that best fits the flow and effect of the text.

Reflecting the textual movements and mood into the sermon does not restrain the preacher's creativity or flexibility. Rather, while the preacher follows the flow of the text, he can creatively design a homiletical medium that can develop the emotional empathy of the audience.[75] For instance, although the preacher follows the flow of the text and remodels the structure/emotional elements and movements into the homiletical medium, the determination of actual sermon parts with the homiletical medium is flexible and depends upon the preacher's creativity. Issues such as how much time the preacher devotes to explaining the homiletical ideas and what kinds of illustrations and applications are used leave considerable room for the preacher's creativity and imagination. In fact, the clearer design the preacher has for the sermon structure, the more creatively he can utilize that structure. In short, genre-sensitive preaching of a

[74]Here, an inductive form is different from the inductive preaching that the new homileticians ardently support. Whereas the former allows the preacher to use deductive elements in which the preacher can explain, illustrate, and apply the homiletical ideas for their clear and accurate communication, the latter leaves the audience to understand and apply the meaning of the text.

lament psalm that takes the structural/emotional elements and movements of text as the major determiner in designing and developing the homiletical medium can liberate the preacher's imagination and creativity within legitimate textual guidance and boundaries.

Devising the homiletical mood. Preaching involves both the matter and the manner of communication at the same time. In line with the interconnection between the matter and manner of preaching, the preacher's design of the homiletical structure naturally leads to the question of how to devise the homiletical mood in pursuit of the audience's emotional and existential engagement with the sermon. Different forms offer the audience different experiences of the homiletical content—different ways of thinking, feeling, or acting.[76] In conjunction with the issue of structure, the manner of preaching involves the way in which the matter is delivered, and influences the way the audience feels the matter—that is, the mood of the sermon.

In particular, in order to preach a lament psalm with genre-sensitivity, the preacher must reflect the mood of the text in the distinguishing manner of the text in the sermon. In this regard, Chisholm states,

> Attention to the psalmist's moods and emotions enables one to capture the pathos of the psalm and reflect it in sermon, where it is important to reach the emotions, as well as the intellect, of the audience. As much as possible, the expositor should recreate the psalmist's emotions in his or her own audience to facilitate their application of the psalm's message to their own experience.[77]

Thus, in order to reanimate the textual pathos in the audience's hearts, the preacher must devise the mood of the sermon in reference to the emotional elements and

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[75]Allen, "Preparing a Text-Driven Sermon,"107.

[76]Geidanus, *The Modern Preacher*, 141-42.

movements of the text. The text's emotions and movements influence the evocative communication of the sermon in two ways— the creation of emotional arch (movement) of the sermon and the use of evocative language in the sermon.

The preacher first needs to create the emotional arch of the sermon in reference to the actual emotional movements of the text, which has already been established in the exegetical/theological process. Larsen contrasts the emotional outline with the logical outline, arguing that a sermon needs "peaks and valleys." He states, "There need to be moments of effective intensity and then backing off and moments of relief for the congregation. Working at half throttle all the time won't do, nor will going at full bore throughout delivery, like lightning which flashes all over but strikes nowhere." [78]

In creating the emotional arch of a sermon for a lament psalm, the preacher needs to be attentive to the emotional movements of the chosen text. In fact, each lament psalm has one or more of five typical patterns of emotional movements— (1) from lament to praise, (2) from praise to lament, (3) the return to lament after praise, (4) alternation of them, and (5) absence of movement. Thus, in formulating an emotional arch in the sermon, the preacher should apply one of the patterns which best fits the text in order to recreate the textual impact in the sermon.

Reflecting the patterns of the emotional movement into the sermon is essential for genre-sensitive preaching of a lament psalm, since each pattern of the emotional movements of the lament psalms also conveys unique theological implications: (1) God answers prayer and delivers the lamenters; (2) the believer's faith sometimes does not

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[77]Chisholm, "Interpreting the Psalms," 19.

[78]Larsen, *Anatomy of Preaching*, 70. See also Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety*, 53.

have answers; (3) the believer's faith journey is a long process; (4) despite the believer's experience of God's answer and deliverance, his life of faith still has ambiguity and the element of tension; and (5) faith does not always resolve the problems of life. A genre-sensitive preacher should create the emotional arch alongside the timeless theological implications derived from the actual textual emotional movements so that he can both faithfully communicate the total meaning of the text and build the textual pathos into the sermon.

After creating the overall emotional movements of the sermon, the preacher also needs to create the detailed emotional overtones of the sermon by finding appropriate words or expressions that can reanimate the psalmist's emotions in the audience's hearts. Since the preacher's style is also a matter of engaging with the audience's hearts,[79] the preacher needs to enhance his style in order to reflect the mood of the text into the sermon. In this stylizing process, while being faithful to the intellectual content and emotional impact of the text, the preacher can utilize modern evocative language and discover modern equivalent images and metaphors.[80] In addition, in response to the different emotional effects of parallelisms in the text, the preacher can express the homiletical ideas in repetitive, symmetric, or contrastive patterns so that the same meaning of the text can be transposed with the emotional force of the text into the sermonic mood.

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[79]Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 230

[80]Greg W. Parsons, "Guidelines for Understanding and Proclaiming the Psalms," *BSac* 147 (1990): 178-84; and Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 23-25. For guidance and criteria for utilizing figures of speech, see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968); and Bruce K. Waltke, "Historical Grammatical Problems," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 114-17.

In short, for preaching a lament psalm with genre-sensitivity, the preacher must reanimate the textual pathos in the sermonic pathos. He must create the dominant homiletical mood by designing the emotional arch of the sermon to match the structural/emotional movement of the text. Furthermore, he must create the detailed homiletical mood by utilizing evocative language, expressions, and patterns, which can faithfully transfer the emotional impact of the text to the sermon.

Formulating Genre-Sensitive Actual Homiletical Parts

Once the preacher formulates the basic homiletical compositional elements (the homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood) for a lament psalm, he needs to work on the actual sermon parts (explanation, illustration, application, transition, introduction, and conclusion), paying careful attention to the interlocking nature among these basic compositional components. In other words, the preacher must compose each sermon part to facilitate the clear and accurate communication of the homiletical message. However, to recreate the rhetorical dynamics, especially the unique emotional and experiential quality of the text, in the impact of the sermon, a genre-sensitive preacher also needs to formulate the medium-driven and mood-driven sermon parts. In fact, just as the preacher in the holistic exegetical process complements structural or thematic analysis of a lament psalm with emotional analysis, the preacher in the holistic homiletical process needs to focus on the medium and mood of the sermon when composing each actual component with a view to intensifying the impact of the sermon to match the textual impact.

Genre-sensitive explanation. In terms of chronological order, explaining the

homiletical ideas must proceed before developing other sermon parts such as illustrations and applications, because an illustration basically serves to open a "window" to the biblical truth while an application serves to give that truth "hands and legs." Without doubt, the preacher needs to explain and prove a homiletical idea with accuracy and clarity. However, a genre-sensitive preacher cannot be satisfied with explaining the homiletical idea clearly and accurately only. For genre-sensitive preaching of a lament psalm, it is important that the homiletical ideas also be emotionally identified and connected with the audience.

In an effort to help the mind and heart of the audience engage with a lament psalm, the preacher must consider the intellectual and emotional stimulation even while explaining and proving the homiletical ideas. The preacher must determine the placement and amount of explanation by considering how it can be associated with the homiletical medium. At the same time, a genre-sensitive preacher needs to consider how his explanation components can operate in step with the homiletical mood. In this sense, the preacher can utilize evocative, emphatic, sensory, and concrete language including images, metaphors and evocative patterns to add emotional force to the sermon.[81]

Whatever preaching is, it is at its foundation explaining a text of Scripture. Thus, the preacher must explain the homiletical ideas clearly and accurately. However, a genre-sensitive preacher of a lament psalm also needs to convey the biblical truth and emotional impact to the audience. He should make efforts to explain the homiletical ideas

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[81]Ronald J. Allen, "Shaping Sermons by the Language of the Text," in *Preaching Biblically*, ed. Don M. Wardlaw (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 35-37. Allen suggests that the preacher needs to substitute a contemporary image or metaphor for the biblical one if it conveys the same feeling. See also Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety*, 48-61.

captivatingly and attractively, considering the structural/emotional qualities of the text (the medium and mood of the text). The preacher should not fill the sermon with careless structural/emotional elements in fear of making it mere informational preaching; at the same time, he should not neglect his commitment to explaining the text in a way that makes it emotionally engaging preaching. Ultimately, striking the balance is the key in developing the quantity and quality of the emotional elements for genre-sensitive explanations for lament psalms, considering the genre characteristics of the text.

Genre-sensitive illustration. An illustration is a crucial component of the sermon. A good illustration has the power to make a good sermon better.[82] Conversely, the use of inappropriate illustrations can reduce the persuasive effect of the sermon. Accordingly, the preacher must carefully discern what makes a good illustration, and check the purposes, sources, and quality of one. The bottom line for a genre-sensitive illustration is that it should be a "window" through which people see the text. At the same time, it should be a "mirror" that exactly reflects the text and its nature. In other words, an illustration is good only insofar as it leads the audience to the text; the best illustration is both compelling and faithful to the text.

To discover and develop a genre-sensitive illustration for preaching a lament psalm, the preacher should take not only the congregation's minds but also their hearts into consideration. In particular, as the text displays distinguishing emotional and experiential natures in real life contexts, the preacher needs to find life-situational

[82]Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 191.

illustrations that can legitimately mirror the textual meaning and mood.[83]

For the effective use of illustrations with genre-sensitivity, the preacher first needs to consider the purpose of the illustration. In preaching a lament psalm, the sermon generally aims at the affective domain of the audience. Thus, the preacher must purposely choose and place illustrations that effectively carry the most emotional force to emotionally engage the audience. Although illustrations can be utilized for enlightening and clarifying biblical truth, the genre-sensitive preacher must intentionally consider whether the illustrations are well chosen and arranged to reflect the textual moods.

Second, the preacher needs to ponder the placement of illustrations. Since form follows function, the structure of the sermon usually dictates the place of illustrations. Each homiletical idea can provide opportunities for illustrations.[84] In preaching a lament psalm following an inductive homiletical pattern, the preacher can place an illustration for the homiletical idea in any part of a sermon. However, he must consider whether his placement is compatible with the structural/emotional movements.

Finally, the preacher needs to be deliberate regarding the source and quality of an illustration so that it best illuminates the text and engages the audience.[85] In this sense, a powerful illustration arises from the intersection of the preacher's experiences and the congregation's experiences.[86] In a lament psalm, the text itself was written in response to

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[83]For the effectiveness of life-situated illustrations, see Bryan Chapell, *Using Illustrations to Preach with Power* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 65-83.

[84]York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 145-46.

[85]Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 154.

[86]In this regard, see Robinson's two circles on the sources of illustrations–the speaker and the listener's circles. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* 156.

life-situations the psalmist experienced. Thus, an illustration in which both the preacher and his audience share life-experienced stories will be even more persuasive.[87] For genre-sensitivity, the preacher's illustration should mirror the text; thus, he should consider enhancing biblical relevance by reflecting the textual mood. In this respect, Chisholm correctly states, "In proclaiming the psalm, the preacher should help the audience connect with the psalmist at an emotional level, perhaps by asking them to recall a time in their lives when they may have felt the depth of emotion expressed by the psalmist."[88] Thus, the most powerful illustration for preaching a lament psalm can be the common experiences the preacher and his congregation can share, reflecting the textual mood.

In short, a sermon illustration is essential for preaching which helps the audience understand and experience the biblical truth in vivid, concrete, persuasive ways. A genre-sensitive preacher must make an effort to find and develop illustrations that resonate with people's minds, emotions, and wills, demonstrating how the illustrations mirror the text. Such illustrations can provide holistic understanding of the biblical truth through emotions and experience, and can make God's Word accessible, understandable, and real to the audience in ways which mere propositional statements cannot.[89]

Genre-sensitive application. As Chapell aptly states, "Without application, the preacher has no reason to preach, because truth without application is useless."[90] With

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[87]Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 176.

[88]Chisholm, "Interpreting the Psalms," 19.

[89]Chapell explains that "Illustrations, of course, do not make biblical concepts propositionally true, but they do explain those concepts in the terms of experience that make what the Bible teaches truth for our living reality." Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 284.

[90]Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 199-200. Concerning the necessity of application in

applications, the preacher not only proclaims what the biblical truth is and why it is truth, but also visualizes where a biblical truth should be operating in the audience's lives, providing life-situational specificity.[91] However, recognizing the necessity of application does not automatically lead to its effectiveness. The preacher needs to consider many aspects to make appropriate and effective application. One of the aspects the preacher often neglects is genre consideration. To make an effective application from a lament psalm, the preacher must consider the placement, amount, and quality of application in consideration of its genre characteristics.

First of all, the preacher must determine the placement and amount of application in consideration of the homiletical medium (the sermon structure). Application can be made whenever the homiletical ideas are clearly delivered throughout the sermon. Or, application may be reserved until the end. There is no right or wrong. However, in preaching a lament psalm, the most effective place is at the end of the sermon. Even if the preacher employs deductive elements in an overall inductive pattern, detailed application after each homiletical idea can hinder the movement and impact of the sermon as it seeks to match the textual impact. In this sense, although application is essential for preaching, indiscreet application without consideration of the genre characteristics of the text can reduce its effectiveness. How the text develops will determine how much application the preacher utilizes and where he places it.

In addition, the preacher must determine the application in consideration of the

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expository preaching, see also Hershael W. York and Scott A. Blue, "Is Application Necessary in the Expository Sermon?," *SBJT* 4 (1999): 70-84.

[91]Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 216-19.

homiletical mood. In application, the preacher can pour out his heart.[92] The preacher's emotional appeals in application must be driven by the textual meaning and mood in order to be faithful to the text and to avoid manipulating the audience.[93] Since an illustration that matches the textual meaning and mood can have the function of explanation and application of the homiletical idea, weaving a life-situational illustration with a specific application that legitimately mirrors the textual meaning and mood can greatly enhance the effectiveness of application, giving more relevance and realism to the homiletical message.

In short, the preacher must try to apply the biblical truth to the audience's specific lives. However, an effective application flows from a sermon that is driven by the text and its nature. An immediate life-change of the audience may happen through the preacher's applications, yet their ultimate life-change comes through proper exposure to the living Word of God. Accordingly, as the preacher seeks the audience's life-change through his use of applications, he should consider the nature of the text.

Genre-sensitive introduction, conclusion, and transition. The introduction of a sermon is as important as the body of a sermon. As Calvin Miller states, "The first three minutes before an audience determine whether or not they will hear us at all."[94] In fact, it is very difficult to draw the audience's attention to the body of the sermon if the preacher lost their interest and concern in the introduction. Accordingly, the preacher

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[92]Ibid., 234.

[93]Dooley and Vines, "Delivering a Text-Driven Sermon," 247.

[94]Calvin Miller, *The Empowered Communicator* (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 19.

must invite his congregation into the sermon by raising the need of the congregation and thus capturing their interest, and by orienting them to the subject and showing its relevance.

Besides satisfying these general purposes of an introduction with various types of introduction, a genre-sensitive preacher should be able to establish an intellectual and emotional bond between the psalmist in the text and the congregation in an effective introduction for a lament psalm.[95] Accordingly, the preacher must pay attention to the rhetorical strategies in the text that usually start with invocation, followed by complaints or pleas. In this regard, the best way of crafting a good introduction for preaching a lament psalm is to utilize life-situational illustrations and compelling questions within an inductive progression of a sermon, which can help the audience engage with the psalmist logically and emotionally. Once the audience has intellectually and emotionally identified to the psalmist in the introduction, they are prepared to receive the flow of the sermon that matches the sequence of the text.

An effective conclusion when preaching a lament psalm also needs careful preparation. A clear summary or restatement of the central homiletical idea (the last homiletical point in the inductive form) and dominant applications should be included in the conclusion. However, while being faithful to the central homiletical idea, the preacher needs to consider the emotional arch of the sermon when formulating the conclusion. In this sense, sermons for most lament psalms that show the typical emotional movement

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[95]Craig A. Loscalzo, *Preaching Sermons that Connect* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 20-22. While emphasizing the close relationship between identification and persuasion, Loscalzo states, "All the logical arguments in the world will not persuade as effectively as the realty that you truly have identified with the lives of your hearers."

from lament to praise should mirror the upward progression of the emotional arch, arriving at their greatest intensity in the conclusion. However, for some lament psalms with different structural/emotional movements, the preacher needs to craft a skillful conclusion that fits the movement of the passage emotionally as well as intellectually. Weaving a mood-driven illustration with application can be a good option for a genre-sensitive conclusion. The bottom line is that the preacher can create an effective genre-sensitive conclusion when he focuses on the homiletical message, medium, and mood.

Transitions function as bridges between sermon parts or movement so that the audience can follow the progress of a sermon smoothly. Thus, proper transitional statements powerfully affect the quality of effective communication. An effective transition for preaching a lament psalm should be harmonized with the conceptual and emotional rhythms that run through the sermon.[96] The structural/emotional movements of the text have different timeless theological implications which operate with different communicational impacts, and a genre-sensitive preacher must determine the placement and quality of transitional statements in consideration of these theological implications and communicational impacts. When the transitional statements in the lament psalms are crafted in conjunction with the timeless theological implications and communicational impact of the textual movements and moods, they can function by "shifting gears" for the overall movements and moods of the sermon.

Establishing Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Findings

The purpose of the genre-sensitive homiletical process is to help the preacher

[96]Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 261.

holistically and organically reflect the genre characteristics of the text in the formation of the actual sermon. Accordingly, the preacher must formulate all the homiletical components based upon the interlocking nature of the genre-based essential elements. When following the above procedure, the preacher composes a sermon from a lament psalm that is guided by the purpose, message, medium, and mood of the text. Specifically, the preacher transposes the textual purpose (genre-based contextual element) into the homiletical purpose, following the multiple and prioritized purposes of the text—the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose. Based upon this genre-sensitive homiletical purpose, the preacher formulates a genre-sensitive homiletical message, medium, and mood, in reference to the textual message, medium, and mood (genre-based textual elements). As a result, the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood (the genre-based essentials) serve as the basic framework, which holistically influences the preacher to determine the placement, amount, and quality of the actual sermon parts (genre-sensitive explanation, illustration, application, transition, introduction, and conclusion). In this way, the preacher can compose a sermon that reflects the genre characteristics of the text in all the sermon parts.

In conclusion, a genre-honoring homiletical process for a lament psalm requires the preacher to be always attentive to what the text ways and to what the text does by honoring the purpose, message, medium, and mood of the text throughout the entire homiletical process. This holistic homiletical process will produce a genre-sensitive basic compositional framework and genre-sensitive actual sermon parts. When the preacher uses these holistic homiletical findings in completing a sermon, genre-sensitive expository preaching of a lament psalm can be naturally driven by the purpose,

message, medium, and mood of the text. In addition, a genre-sensitive homiletical process can be an effective and practical tool that helps the preacher make a text-driven sermon, honoring the biblical authority and relevance of biblical communication. Ultimately, this genre-sensitive preaching methodology allows the audience to understand and experience the biblical meaning and impact, directing them and exhorting them to surrender to the text.

CHAPTER 5

A GENRE-SENSITIVE PREACHING METHODOLOGY APPLIED TO PSALM 31

Introduction

The primary purpose of this chapter is to prove the validity of the proposed genre-sensitive expository preaching methodoloy for the lament psalms by providing a case study of Psalm 31. While following the twelve steps for this methodology,[1] this chapter also provides the genre-sensitive exgetical, theological, and homiletical findings of Psalm 31.

Despite the lack of complete consensus on its generic classification,[2] Psalm 31, while being often compared with Psalm 22, has generally been regarded as one of the representative lament psalms.[3] In particular, Psalm 31 can be recognized as an individual lament psalm including the psalmist's petition, complaint, and even imprecatory contents, yet it has also the elements and quality of the communal lament psalms. Thus, belonging to the general category of the lament psalms, Psalm 31 is a suitable case study for the genre-sensitive expository preaching methodology proposed in the previous chapters.

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[1]For the outline of the twelve steps for preaching a lament psslam, see Appendix 4.

[2]Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, in vol 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 301-02. VanGemeren explains that "The difficulty in determining the literary genre of this psalm has led many scholars to view it as a composite work from anonymous authors." Yet he classifies this psalm as a lament, stating "the tone of the psalm vacillates between lament and thanksgiving."

[3]Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, WBC, vol. 19 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 263.

The divergent scholarly analyses of the thematic, structural, and pragmatic elements of Pslam 31 help make it an even better candidate for the case study of a genre-sensitive expository preaching methodology. For instance, VanGemeren divides Psalm 31 into two parts: prayer (vv. 1-18) and thanksgiving (vv. 19-24).[4] Although VanGemeren recognizes the mood change at verses 6, 14, and 19, he seems to overlook the overall formal and functional (communicational) elements in his outline in favor of a more logical or thematic analysis.[5] Craigie also separates Psalm 31 into two parts but differently configured: prayer (vv. 1-19) and thanksgiving and praise (vv. 20-25).[6] Craigie emphasizes both the inner chiastic structure within verses 2-19 and the cultic act of verses 20-25. His analysis may highlight the unity of the psalm by showing the thematic/structural coherence, yet it pays little attention to the functional elements, especially emotional elements and movements.

While mentioning that "all commentators agree that Psalm 31 shows neither

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[4]All scripture quotations in this chapter are from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

[5]VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 302. His detailed analysis of Ps 31 is as follows:

I. Prayer (vv. 1-18)
   A Prayer for Yahweh's Righteousness (vv. 1-5)
   B Expression of Trust (vv. 6-8)
   A' Prayer for Yahweh's Favor (vv. 9-13)
   B' Expression of Trust (vv. 14-18)
II. Thanksgiving (vv. 19-24)

[6]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 259. His detailed analysis of Ps 31 is as follows:

I. Prayer (vv.1-18)
   A Prayer (vv. 2-6)
   B Trust (vv. 7-9)
   C Lament (vv. 10-14)
   B' Trust (v. 15)
   A' Prayer (vv. 16-19)
II. Thanksgiving (vv. 19-24)

logical nor literary order,"[7] Gerstenberger analyzes this psalm from his typical form-critical perspective.[8] His analysis shows the interaction of structure and function with the text as a self-contained unit. His analysis, however, while showing his rigid and detailed generic categorization, does not recognize the overall functional patterns or communicational impacts, which are formed by the structural/emotional movements within the text.

Some commentators divide this psalm into three parts, emphasizing two typical formulae of lament psalms (vv. 1-8 and vv. 9-20) with additional praise and exhortations (vv. 21-24).[9] Focusing on the vivid emotional movements, some commentators divide

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[7]Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1 with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 137.

[8]His form-critical analysis of Ps 31 is as follows:

1. Superscription
2. Initial Plea (vv. 1-2)
3. Affirmation of Confidence (vv. 3-6)
    A. Confessional Statements (vv. 3a and 4b)
    B. Petitions (vv. 3b and 4a)
    C. Self-dedication (v. 5a)
    D. Affirmation of confidence (v. 5b)
    E. Confession to Community (v. 6)
        a. Protestation of innocence (v. 6a)
        b. Affirmation of confidence (v. 6b)
4. Thanksgiving (vv. 7-8)
5. Complaint (vv. 9-13)
6. Petition (vv. 14-18)
    A. Affirmation of confidence (vv. 14 and 15a)
    B. Petition (vv. 15b-17a)
    C. Imprecation (vv. 17b-18)
7. Personal Hymn (vv. 19-21)
    A. Communal Adoration (vv.19-20)
    B. Personal Blessing, praise (v. 21)
8. Thanksgiving (v. 22)
9. Exhortation, blessing (vv. 23-24)

[9]See James L. May, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 142-43; and Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Storphic Structure and Theological Commentary*, Eerdmans Critical Commentry (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 287-88.

this psalm into two parts.[10] In short, these diverse analytical suggestions may indicate a challenge to the proper analysis of the Psalm 31, yet they also provide a chance to validate the interpretive capacity of the genre-sensitive preaching methodology for the lament psalms proposed in the previous chapters.

A Genre-Sensitive Exegetical Process for Psalm 31

Preliminary Study of the text and Survey of the Contexts

The first step for the genre-sensitive exegetical process is to select a preaching text and delimit it. Since there is no controversy over the delimitation of Psalm 31, selecting the entire psalm as a preaching unit seems straightforward. After determining and delimiting Psalm 31 as a preaching unit, the preacher needs to translate the text with careful observations and preliminary studies of possible interpretive difficulties in the text.[11] The preacher then must read and meditate upon the whole psalm,

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[10]See Arthur Weiser, *The Psalms*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1962), 275-76; John Goldingay, *Psalms*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 436-37; and Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 147-48.

[11]Based upon my research, noteworthy observations and possible interpretive difficulties are as follows: (1) the sharp transition to a qatal verb "you have redeemed" in v. 5 indicates the beginning of the psalmist's statements regarding what God has done and the qatal verbs "I have hated" and "I have trusted" in v. 6 show the attitude the psalmist has shown to God's previous deliverance. (2) one Hebrew manuscript and other versions (Septuagint, Syiac, and the Vulgate) indicate that the first verb in v.6 is read as "You have hated." Although it is possible, the Masoretic Text's "I have hated" also makes good sense. (3) in v. 10, the reading "because of my affliction" (NIV), implied by Septuagint and Symmachus, may cohere with the immediate context of the text. In this case, this verse suggests that trouble does not always link with sin. However, the reading "because of my iniquity" (ESV) with the Masoretic Text introduces a new idea. Perhaps the Masoretic Text suggests that all our lives are affected by our wrongdoing and that our trouble can be increased by it. (4) the imperative "rescue me" in v. 15, the cohortative "let me not be put to shame" in v. 17, and the jussive "let the wicked be put to shame" and "let the lying lips be mute" correspond to the three directions of a lament toward God, the psalmist, and the enemies. (5) the verb *gāraz* in v. 22 appears only here in the Masoertic Text, but it has similar meaning to *gāzar*, suggesting "being cut off" from God's hand or His attention. For more detailed explanations of possible meanings for some original languages and the grammatical and syntactical difficulties in Ps 31, see Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 256-57; and Goldingay, *Psalms*, 434-36.

remembering the fact that it is not only a song but also a prayer.

The next step is the preliminary study of its context. In reality, the preacher may have particular pastoral or theological contexts for choosing this psalm as a preaching unit. Perhaps his personal study of the text may make the preacher recognize the contextual similarities between the text and his contemporary audience, and thus drives him to select it as a preaching unit. No matter what the chronological order is, the preacher must be careful not to distort the meaning of the text, overemphasizing a particular historical context without exact historical location of the text or imposing particular contemporary contexts into the text.

The preacher should be more focused on a text driven analysis of its context. In this respect, the superscription of Psalm 31 indicates that the biblical author of this lament psalm is King David, yet it does not designate the exact historical context. The general context should thus be surveyed through the text. Based upon the preliminary study and survey of the text, the preacher finds the following contextual clues: the psalmist is in distress and threatened by enemies and friends (vv. 4, 8, and 11), and sickness and nearness of death (v. 12). These are the only textual clues. However, they suggest plausible histoical contexts such as David's sojourn in Keliah and his escape from Saul's chase in the wilderness of Ziph and Maon in 1 Samuel 23.

Analyzing the Semantic Meaning and the Textual Organization

Once the preacher finishes his preliminary studies of the text and its contexts, he needs to analyze the semantic meaning and organization of the text. In order to fully understand what the author said through the text and how he said it, the preacher follows a three-step procedure for a holistic analysis, which covers the analyses of the genre-

textual elements—the message, medium, and mood of the text.

The medium-focused linear analysis. The preacher first undertakes a medium-focused linear analysis of Psalm 31 in conjunction with thematic analysis. The primary purpose of the medium-focused analysis is to sketch the big picture of the entire text, determining each strophic unit and grouping them into main divisions. Rather than analyzing the detailed content of the text, the preacher in this analysis seeks to grasp the prominent structural/thematic patterning or characteristics of the entire text, moving back and forth between the parts of the text and the whole. This medium-focused analysis of Psalm 31 helps the preacher recognize the general feature of the text: there is an alternating series of the psalmist's trust in God and his petition for God's deliverance, accompanied by occasional reasons for his trust and petition and by final commands for trust. In addition, while analyzing and modifying the formal/functional elements of the text, the preacher draws a tentative sketch of the whole psalm, recognizing the main divisions and strophic units with them.[12]

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[12]A tentative outline by medium-focused analysis of Ps 31 is as follows:

1. Strophic Unit 1/Petition and Complaint (vv. 1-5)
   Trust (vv.1 and 3)
   Petition and Complaint the Reason (vv. 1, 2, 3, and 4)
   Trust (v. 5)

2. Strophic Unit 2/Profession and Praise (vv. 6-8)
   Trust and Reason (vv. 6-8)

3. Strophic Unit 3/Complaint (vv. 9-13)
   A. Complaint and Reason (vv. 9-13)

4. Strophic Unit 4/Petition and Imprecation (vv. 14-18)
   Trust (v. 14)
   Petition and Imprecation, the Reason (vv. 15-18)

5. Strophic Unit 5/Profession (vv.19-20)
   Trust and Reason (vv. 19-20)

The message-focused related analysis. Once the preacher has a provisional tentative structural/thematic big picture of the text, the next step is the message-focused analysis. In this analysis, he refines the tentative structural/thematic big picture, examining the thematic details within each strophic unit. While discerning the logical development of the linear structural pattern of the text, the preacher needs to isolate a thematic point in each unit. In doing so, he must consider the unity and connectivity of the thematic points as a whole. In this analysis, the preacher also makes a more detailed study of key terms, images, and metaphors. In particular, while considering three thematic dimensions toward God, self, and enemies, the preacher draws the detailed message of the text. Through this message-focused analysis, the preacher can supplement the structural/thematic analysis with thematic points.[13] As a result, this analysis shows

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6. Strophic Unit 6/Praise (vv. 21-24)
   Trust and Reason (vv. 21-22)
   Trust and Command (vv. 23-24)

[13]A modified outline by the message-focused analysis of Ps 31 is as follows:

1. Strophic Unit 1/Petition and Complaint (vv.1-5). In distress, the Psalmist prays for God to deliver himself from his enemies on the basis of God's righteousness and he commits his life into the hand of God.

2. Strophic Unit 2/Profession and Praise (vv. 6-8). Because the psalmist remembers God's earlier deliverance of him (in the past), the Psalmist vows that he will trust and rejoice in God in response to God's steadfast love (*hesed*).

3. Strophic Unit 3/Complaint (vv. 9-13). The Psalmist is near death and in distress; he prays (complains) over his sufferings that are compounded by diseases as well as scorning and withdrawal of enemies, neighbors, and friends.

4. Strophic Unit 4/Petition and Imprecation (vv. 14-18). Despite distress, the Psalmist commits his life into the hand of God and prays for God to deliver him from his enemies and to punish his enemies on the basis of God's steadfast love (*hesed*).

5. Strophic Unit 5/Profession (vv.19-20) . The Psalmist professes God's goodness and protection for the people who trust in God.

6. Strophic Unit 6/Praise (vv. 21-24). The Psalmist praises God because he remembers that God expressed

that the psalmist seeks help from God as refuge, rock, and fortress (vv. 1-4) in the face of difficulties such as ensnaring enemies (v. 4), physical affliction (vv. 9-10), agonizing lonelines and persecution (vv. 11-14) in the strophic unit 1, 3, and 4 (vv. 1-5, vv. 9-13, and vv. 15-18). At the same time, this analysis indicates that the psalmist remembers God's earlier deliverance and expresses trust in God and praise to Him on the basis of His steadfast love (vv. 7, 16, and 21) in the strophic unit 2, 5, and 6 (vv. 6-8, vv. 19-20, and vv. 21-24).

The mood-focused integrative analysis. Upon completing a structural analysis of Psalm 31, the preacher observes the emotional overtones of the whole psalm, considering the emotional movements and specific emotional expressions in the text. In particular, the significant features of special emotional movements of the text should be noted. As identified in the previous analyses of the medium and message of the text, major breaks occur at verses 6, 9, 14, 19, and 21 of Psalm 31. While these junctures correspond to the psalm's principal strophic divisions through structural/thematic analyses, these breaks also interlock with the shifts of mood of the text. As the result of mood-focused analysis, the preacher can recognize that the whole psalm has two unequal yet still symmetrical cycles of emotional movement from lament to praise.[14] As a result,

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His steadfast love (*hesed*) by delivering the psalmist in trouble and thus he encourages all God's to be strong, trusting in God.

[14]The two cycles of emotional movements of Ps. 31 are as follows:

1. The First Emotional Movement
   Strophic Unit 1/Petition and Complaint (vv.1-5)
   Strophic Unit 2/Profession and Praise (vv. 6-8)

2. The Second Emotional Movement
   Strophic Unit 3/Complaint (vv. 9-13)
   Strophic Unit 4/Petition (vv. 14-18)

while checking how this mood-focused analysis of the whole psalm corresponds with the previous medium and message-focused analyses, the preacher can have a holistic analysis of Psalm 31.[15]

This holistic and integrative analysis thus helps the preacher easily recognize the recurrent pattern and repetitive key terms within these two cycles of emotional movement. As the psalmist moves from petition/complaint to profession/praise in the first cycle of the emotional movement, he shows the same recursive pattern in the second cycle of the emotional movement. In addition, key words such as "take refuge" (vv. 1 and 19), "put to shame" (vv. 1 and 17), "rescue" (vv. 2 and 15), "save" (vv. 2 and 16), "in

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Strophic Unit 5/Profession (vv. 19-20)
Strophic Unit 6/Praise (vv. 21-24)

[15]A holistic analysis of Ps. 31 is as follows:

1. The First Emotional Movement

Strophic Unit 1/Petition and Complaint (vv. 1-5). In distress, the Psalmist earnestly prays for God to deliver him from his enemies on the basis of God's righteousness, and he commits his life into the hand of God.

Strophic Unit 2/Profession and Praise (vv. 6-8). The psalmist remembers God's past deliverance of him and thus he vows that he will trust and rejoice in God in response to God's steadfast love (*hesed*).

2. The Second Emotional Movement

Strophic Unit 3/Complaint (vv. 9-13). The Psalmist is near death and in distress he prays (complains) over his sufferings that are compounded by diseases and by scorning and withdrawal of enemies, neighbors, and friends.

Strophic Unit 4/Petition and Imprecation (vv. 14-18). Despite distress, the Psalmist commits his life into the hand of God and prays for God to deliver him from his enemies and to punish his enemies on the basis of God's steadfast love (*hesed*).

Strophic Unit 5/Profession (vv. 19-20). The Psalmist professes God's goodness and protection for His people.

Strophic Unit 6/Praise (vv. 21-24). The Psalmist praises God in remembering that God expressed His steadfast love (*hesed*) by delivering the psalmist from trouble, and thus he encourages all God's people to be strong, trusting in God.

your hand" (vv. 5 and 15), "Trust" (vv. 6 and 14) and "steadfast love" (vv. 7, 16, and 21) are used in the recursive pattern within the two cycles of emotional movement.[16] Within the two cycles of the emotional movements, the preacher can easily recognize the recurring theological term, God's steadfast love (*hesed*) (vv. 7, 16, and 21). The overarching theme of this psalm is also repeated in two ways of saying the same thing—"into your hands I entrust my spirit (v. 5)" and "my times are in your hand (v. 15).[17] Thus, the preacher is directed to pay special attention to this theological concept, God's faithful love *(hesed),* and the overarching theme of this psalm—the Psalmist's trust in and commitment to God in need.[18] In short, throughout this analysis of Psalm 31, the preacher can see the compositional integrity of the text in terms of the purpose, message, medium, and mood of the text. Thus, the preacher can holistically understand what and how the psalmist communicated through the text—the author's intended meaning and how he communicated it—that is, the author's intended textual organization.

Analyzing the Pragmatic Aspects (Communicational Purpose and Effect) of the Text

Having confirmed the meaning and the textual organization of the text through the previous analysis, the preacher should analyze the pragmatic or functional aspect of the text because genre-sensitivity requires the preacher to analyits its total communicative purpose and effect.

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[16]Criagie, *Psalms 1-50*, 259

[17]Konrad Shaefer, *Psalms*, Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001), 77; and Goldingay, *Psalms*, 450

[18]W. H. Bellinger Jr., *Psalmody and Prophecy*, JSOTSup 27 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 61.

Suggesting multiple contexts for a wide communicational purpose. In order to understand the communicational purpose and effect of the text, the preacher necessarily reconsiders the text in its original historical context (genre contextual component). With the psalms, however, inexact or ambiguous historical references require the preacher to suggest multiple possible contexts for the text based upon the textual clues—plausible historical, categorical, and literary contexts.

In Psalm 31, the title and content of the text suggests a possible historical context in which David is the author of the text, possible being chased by Saul, yet God rescued him.[19] Although this historical background cannot be dogmatically determined as the exact historical context of text, the preacher can conjure up a wide communicational purpose by linking and balancing the information between the title and the actual contents of the text—to appeal to God and trust in God in times of difficulty. Additionally, analyzing the categorical contexts of Psalm 31 helps the preacher confirm that this psalm as a lament is in line with a general purpose of the lament psalms—to turn to God and praise at the end. Finally, surveying the literary contexts also helps the preacher to explore a possible purposive or intentional ordering with adjacent psalms. In fact, while being located between two thanksgiving psalms with the same author, David,[20] Psalm 31 along with its content might suggest a general purpose of the text between the poles of Psalmist's experience—delight and plight—to trust God for His deliverance. In short, through these contextual studies, the preacher can discern a broad

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[19]In fact, LXX links "of alarm" (in v. 22) with 1 Sam 23:25 where David was alarmed by Saul's pursuit of him. See Goldingay, *Psalms*, 438.

[20]VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 296-310.

communicational purpose in linking plausible multiple contextual foci of the text with the above-analyzed semantic meaning and the textual organization.

Discerning the communicational purpose and effect of the text. The next step is to confirm the communicational purpose and effect of the text by analyzing how the author actualized the communicational intention through the text. In other words, the preacher must examine the genre-textual components (the message, medium, and mood of the text) from a discourse perspective to confirm the communicational purpose and effect or impact of the text. In this step, utilizing the illocutionary categories from speech act theory—assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative—and analyzing the prominent illocutionary forces of the text can effectively help the preacher understand the psalmist's communicational purpose and effect.

In this regards, Psalm 31 has an overtly "expressive" function with expressions of petition/complaint and profession/praise, evoking sympathy and praise from the reader. Yet, Psalm 31 also contains prominent repetitive "assertive" functions with an expression of "I trust in the Lord" (vv. 6 and v. 14), and includes a "declarative" function with a repetitive expression of key theological terms, God's steadfast love (vv. 7, 16, and 21). These "assertive" and "declarative" functions convince the reader with the psalmist's conviction of God in His unfailing love *(hesed)*. The preacher can also recognize that along with these "assertive" and "declarative" functions at the significant emotional movement, Psalm 31 shows "commissive" functions (vv. 7-8 and vv. 23-24), inviting the readers to join the psalmist's praise and to trust God.

In short, through this pragmatic analysis based upon the previous analysis of message, medium, and mood of the text, the preacher can sufficiently infer the final

communicational purpose and effect of the text—that is to evoke sympathy from the audience in plight and to encourage them to trust God by affirming and convincing the audience of God's steadfast love.

Establishing the Genre-Sensitive Exegetical Findings

When following the above procedure, the preacher can derive the basic exegetical findings—the meaning (the exegetical outline with propositions) and purpose of the text. In addition, this holistic genre-sensitive exegetical method helps the preacher grasp not only the message but also how the medium and mood (textual organization) interact with that meaning and purpose from the communicational perspective. In other words, the preacher can establish another exegetical finding—the textual organization, which links the meaning and purpose of the text, realizing the rhetorical or communicational dynamics of the text. These holistic exegetical findings are as follows:

1. Textual Purpose. To encourage God's people in need to trust and praise God by affirming and convincing them of God's unfailing love.
2. Textual Meaning and Textual Organization

    The First Emotional Movement

        Strophic Unit 1/Petition and Complaint (vv. 1-5). The psalmist is in distress and he earnestly prays for God to deliver him from his enemies on the basis of God's righteousness, and he commits his life into the hand of God.

        Strophic Unit 2/Profession and Praise (vv. 6-8). The Psalmist vows his trust and rejoices in God's steadfast love (*hesed*), remembering God's past deliverance.

    The Second Emotional Movement

        Strophic Unit 3/Complaint (vv. 9-13). The Psalmist is near death and he prays (complains) over his sufferings that are compounded by disease

and by scorning and withdrawal of enemies, neighbors, and friends.

Strophic Unit 4/Petition (vv. 14-18). Despite various desperate situations, the Psalmist commits his life into the hand of God and prays for God to deliver him from his enemies and to punish his enemies on the basis of God's steadfast love (*hesed*).

Strophic Unit 5/Profession (vv. 19-20). The Psalmist professes and praises God's goodness and protection for the people who trust in God.

Strophic Unit 6/Praise (vv. 21-24). The Psalmist praises God in reviewing God's steadfast love (*hesed*) revealed in delivering the psalmist in need and thus he encourages all God's people to be strong, trusting in God.

3. The Central Exegetical Idea. Because of God's unfailing love, even if the psalmist is in times of various troubles, he continue to pray for God's deliverance and protection and he also continues to commit himself to trust and praise and encourage God's people to trust God.

Based upon the above holistic analysis of Psalm 31, the preacher recognizes that the text has the similar structural/thematic patterns (petition/complaint-profession/praise) that occur in a linear fashion in both cycles of emotional movement. He also recognizes that the overarching theme of the text (the trust in and commitment to God in times of need) and the key theological term (the concept *hesed*) are reinforced at structurally and thematically significant positions (vv. 7, 16, and 21). Consequently, the overarching theme of the text is reinforced by the textual organization, especially by the two cycles of emotional movements (vv. 1-8 and vv. 9-24). In short, the preacher can conclude that the text highlights the main theme and the minor exegetical ideas with repetitive structural/thematic patterns within the two cycles of emotional movements from petition to praise in order to accomplish the textual purpose. Once the preacher has these holistic exegetical findings, he has a solid textual foundation and resources for genre-sensitive preaching of Psalm 31, reflecting not only the meaning and purpose of the text, but also the textual organization into the sermon.

A Genre-Sensitive Theological Process for Psalm 31

The purpose of a genre-specific theological process is to develop and articulate the timeless and relevant theological/doctrinal message to communicate the author's intended meaning of the text. In addition, the preacher examines the genre-characteristic to discern its timeless theological implication and communicational impact in order to honor the relevance of biblical communication in which the author intended to communicate the message with an intended impact or effect through a particular yet timeless conceptual and communicational strategy.

Developing the Theological/Doctrinal Ideas

The first step in the genre-sensitive theological process is to identify and develop the timeless theological/doctrinal propositions from the exegetical ideas. In order to develop the theological/doctrinal ideas of the Psalm 31, the preacher uses the stylizing process and the theological process; the former is to restate the technical, specific, and metaphorical terms into timeless and universal terms and the latter is to articulate the theological/doctrinal propositions by verifying them through the textual, biblical-theological, and systematic-theological prisms.

The stylizing process of Psalm 31 is relatively simple since the lament psalms as prayers were usually written both in condensed poetic expressions and in the present tense. Thus, with the exegetical findings, the preacher has few technical, exegetical, specific, metaphorical terms to paraphrase into more general or universal terms. In fact, the exegetical findings (the textual purpose and meaning) of Psalm 31 established in the exegetical process do not make it difficult for the preacher to overcome the historical, cultural, and linguistic barriers between the text and the contemporary audience.

Finishing the stylizing process, the preacher advances the theologizing process of Psalm 31, which is the heart of the theological process. In this process, the preacher articulates and validates the theological/doctrinal statements by viewing them throughout three basic movements—the textual, biblical, and systematic theological.

At the textual horizon, the preacher articulates the theological/doctrinal ideas based upon the exegetical ideas and also discovers a possible central theological/doctrinal big idea of Psalm 31. In fact, in Psalm 31, God's unfailing love *(hesed),* which occurs at the thematic and structurally-important positions (vv. 7, 16, and 21), functions as a conceptual framework, governing the overall motif and message of the whole psalm—trust in and commitment to God in need. Thus, the preacher recognizes that the covenantal relationship between God and His own people revealed in this theological term, God's unfailing love *(hesed),* functions as the motivational force both for the Psalmist's petition for God's deliverance and for God's deliverance of all who trust in Him. In addition, at the end of the psalm, it functions as the foundational motivation for the conduct of the people of God.

The next stage for the theologizing process is to view this overall theological/doctrinal motif and theme of Psalm 31 from the biblical/canonical theological horizon, through which the preacher examines the formulated theological/doctrinal ideas of the text within the development or progression of God's revelation. Consequently, while keeping the biblical author's intended meaning, the preacher traces how the covenant concept of God's unfailing love *(hesed)* and the theological/doctrinal theme—the trust in and commitment to God in need—can have various significance according to different epochal (covenant) contexts. In fact, tracing these theological significances or allusions, such as the Exodus (v. 7) and God's saving activities in David's life, according

to covenantal fidelity, may provide useful biblical resources for explaining and thus proving God's unfailing love.[21]

In particular, it is at the horizon that the preacher can identify the Christological significances of Psalm 31. The preacher should recognize Jesus' direct quotation of the text (v. 5) and the Christological significance of Psalm 31 within the covenantal theological paradigm. By doing so, the preacher can supply a theological foundation for encouraging the contemporary audience to trust in and praise God even in need by appealing to Christ's death and resurrection as the climatic activity of God's unfailing love, and Christ's final return as the ultimate activity of God's unfailing love.[22]

The final stage of the "theologizing process" is to test and validate each theological/doctrinal statement by viewing them at the systematic theological horizon. While checking whether the central theological/doctrinal big idea and minor theological/doctrinal ideas are accurately articulated through the previous stages by filtering them within a coherent systematic theological framework, the preacher verifies and confirms the theological/doctrinal propositions and central theological/doctrinal big idea of Psalm 31. The following is the result of the stylizing and theologizing process:

1. Transcendent Purpose. To encourage God's people in need to trust and praise God by affirming and convincing them of God's unfailing love.
2. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 1-5). Faith in God's righteousness motivates the believer in distress to pray earnestly for God's deliverance and protection.

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[21]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 260.

[22]For a detailed study of the Christological interpretation or significances of the Psalms, see Richard P. Belcher Jr., *The Messiah and the Psalms: Preaching Christ from All the Psalms* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2006).

3. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 6-8). Remembrance of and Confidence in God's unfailing love (*hesed*) makes the believer in distress praise and trust in God.

4. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 9-13). Faith in God makes the believer in desperate situations complain about (cry over) his various life problems before God through prayer.

5. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 14-18). Faith in God's unfailing love *(hesed)* and justice motivates the believer in distress to pray to God.

6. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 19-20). Confidence in God's goodness and protection makes the believer in distress praise and trust in God.

7. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 21-24). Faith and confidence in God's unfailing love *(hesed)* motivates the believer in distress to praise God and to encourage others of God's people to trust in God.

8. The Theological/Doctrinal Bid Idea. Because of God's unfailing love, the believer even in distress continues to pray to God and continues to praise and trust in Him.

Discerning Genre-Characteristic and Its Theological Implication and Communicational Impact

After developing the theological/doctrinal ideas, a genre-sensitive preacher examines the particular genre characteristic of Psalm 31, to discern its theological implication and communicational impact. In this step, the preacher investigates how the theological/doctrinal truths are communicated by the textual organization and thus discerns what kind of timeless empathy can be transferable to the contemporary audience via the textual organization.

In fact, a particular genre characteristic of a lament psalm usually depends upon the interrelatedness between the textual meaning and the textual organization, which is composed of typical formal and functional elements such as invocation, petition, complaint, confession, imprecation, profession, and praise. In addition, different structural/emotional movements entailed by different formal and functional elements and

movements uniquely outline a theological/doctrinal implication. At the same time, such elements and movements are intended to be the building blocks used to communicate the impact of the text.

In this respect, preaching Psalm 31 in a genre-sensitive manner requires the preacher to scrutinize the unique formal/functional elements and their movements in relation to the theological/doctrinal big idea(s). After identifying the formal/functional elements and movements, the preacher determines the theological implication and communicational impact of Psalm 31 in the genre-sensitive theological process.

As noted in the exegetical process, in Psalm 31 the psalmist communicates his crisis and confidence in God's unfailing love through the avenues of two cycles of the emotional movement from petition to praise with repeated formal/functional elements (petition/complaint and profession/praise). Thus, this psalm both thematically and structurally shows an example of a prayer that needs to be prayed twice.[23] The preacher can think of the various reasons for the psalmist's praying twice.[24]

The preacher, however, can understand that by employing the communicational or rhetorical strategy of these two cycles of emotional movements, the psalmist conveys an important theological implication, namely, *faith is not a onetime commitment, but requires a lifetime commitment.*[25] In other words, the preacher can

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[23]Goldingay, *Psalms*, 450.

[24]Ibid. Concerning the possible reasons for the repeated prayer, Goldingay states, "That might be because it has received no answer. It might be because the actual situation stays the same—and thus gets worse. Or it might be because this is required by the complexity of the tale that needs telling, or the depth of the feelings that need expressing, or the greatness of the God who needs to be acknowledged. So one statement is insufficient."

[25]VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 310.

discern the following theological implication by analyzing the formal/functional elements and movements: *the believer's faith journey toward restoration or redemption is a long process so that during the faith journey, the believer must continue to trust in God, regardless of his circumstances in life.*

At the same time, the preacher recognizes that by employing these two cycles of emotional movements, the psalmist intended to convey the central theological message (the trust in and commitment to God in need) and the key theological term (God's unfailing love) within the unique communicational impact of Psalm 31. The psalmist reinforced the overarching theological theme of the text through the repetitive structural/emotional patterning and articulation of the key theological/doctrinal concept, God's unfailing love. Thus, through this step, a genre-sensitive preacher concludes that he needs to preserve and remodel these two cycles of the structural/emotional movements into the sermon with a view to honoring the total communication of the text. In short, when the preacher discerns and reflects this important theological implication and communicational impact into the sermon, he can faithfully accentuate a central theological/doctrinal message without jettisoning the biblical author's intended textual impact.

Organizing the Theological/Doctrinal Ideas with the Timeless Implications and Impact of Genre-Characteristic

Once the preacher finishes developing the theological/doctrinal propositions, the timeless theological implication, and communicational impact from the genre characteristic of a lament psalm, he enlists them in the theological/homiletical outline. The purpose of this organizing process in the genre-sensitive theological process is to

determine the arrangement of the theological/doctrinal propositions with the timeless theological implication of a particular genre characteristic of a lament psalm in order to keep the communicational impact of the text in the theological process. In fact, this theological/homiletical outline provides the raw materials from which the sermon outline will be constructed.

Accordingly, a genre-sensitive preacher of Psalm 31 first enlists the theological/doctrinal ideas following the exegetical sequence or outline. He then considers how to arrange the timeless implication with the theological/doctrinal ideas, considering the communicational impact of the text. In the case of Psalm 31, the best places to insert the timeless theological implications are at the end of the first structural/emotional movement and at the end of the second structural/emotional movement. Consequently, while following the flow of the theological/doctrinal ideas, the preacher can insert the following statements of the theological implication: (1) at the end of the first structural/emotional movement, *faith is not a onetime commitment to God in need,* and (2) at the end of the second structural/emotional movement, *faith is a lifetime commitment to God, regardless of any circumstantial difficulty*. Finally, the preacher enlists the central theological/doctrinal idea at the end of the theological outline, by which the preacher and the contemporary audience summarize the overall theological/doctrinal truth of the text.

Establishing the Genre-Sensitive Theological Findings

When following the above procedure, the preacher articulates the timeless theological/doctrinal ideas of Psalm 31, which are transferred to the contemporary audience, overcoming the historical, cultural, and linguistic gaps between the ancient text

and the contemporary audience. In addition, the preacher discovers a unique theological implication and communicational impact from the unique genre characteristic of Psalm 31 embedded in the structural/emotional elements and movements; he can thus organize the timeless theological truths with the timeless theological implication of genre-characteristic, honoring the author's communicational impact of the text and seeking to make it effective and relevant to the contemporary audience. For a text-faithful and genre-sensitive preacher, the following genre-sensitive theological findings help him to communicate the timeless biblical truth with the author's intended communicational impact of the text.

1. Transcendent Purpose. To encourage God's people in times of troubles to pray and trust in God by affirming and convincing them of God's unfailing love.

2. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 1-5). Faith in God's righteousness motivates the believer in distress to pray earnestly for God's deliverance and protection.

3. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 6-8). Remembrance of and Confidence in God's unfailing love (*hesed*) makes the believer in distress praise and trust in God.

4. Timeless Theological Implication of the First Structural/Emotional Movement. Faith in God is not a onetime commitment in need.

5. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 9-13). Faith in God makes the believer in desperate situations complain about (cry over) his various life problems before God through prayer.

6. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 14-18). Faith in God's unfailing love *(hesed)* and justice motivates the believer in distress to pray for God.

7. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 19-20). Confidence in God's goodness and protection makes the believer in distress praise and trust in God.

8. Theological/Doctrinal Idea (vv. 21-24). Faith and confidence in God's unfailing love *(hesed)* motivates the believer in distress to praise God and to encourage God's people to trust in God.

9. Timeless Theological Implication of the Second Structural/Emotional Movement

Faith in God is a lifetime commitment to God regardless of any circumstantial difficulty

10. The Central Theological/Doctrinal Idea. Because of God's unfailing love, the believer even in distress continues to pray to God and continues to praise and trust in Him.

A Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Process for Psalm 31

The primary purpose of the genre-sensitive homiletical process is to formulate the basic homiletical framework (the homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood) and the actual sermon parts (explanation, illustration, application, transition, introduction, and conclusion) in consideration of a particular genre characteristic of the text and the interlocking nature of the genre essentials (the textual purpose, message, medium, and mood).

Formulating Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Purpose

To engage in genre-sensitive preaching of Psalm 31, the preacher first formulates the homiletical purpose, which must be compatible with the needs of the congregation as well as with the textual purpose, meaning and contexts. The preacher draws legitimate parallels between the psalmist's crises in Psalm 31, such as threats of enemies (vv. 4, 8, 11), sickness (v. 10), contempt of neighbors (v. 11), and slander (v. 13), and the specific afflictions encountered by his own the congregation, discovered by the audience analysis. Accordingly, the preacher can naturally reflect the textual purpose into the homiletical purpose. In particular, while analyzing his specific congregation, the preacher focuses on the theological conflicts or struggles between life-situation and belief-situation shared by the psalmist and his congregation. Based upon this legitimate theological parallel, the preacher avoids imposing sub-purposes of the text or his own

purpose into the primary purpose of the sermon. Instead, he reflects the psalmist's multiple yet prioritized communicational channels (the cognitive, emotional, and volitional responses or directions) into the holistic and multiple homiletical purposes—the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose.

The primary homiletical purpose of Psalm 31 is *to encourage the congregation in need to continue to pray to and trust in God.* However, in order to attain this primary purpose, which belongs to the affective and attitudinal domain, the preacher also needs to pursue the secondary yet essential homiletical purpose by appealing to the cognitive domain. In this sense, the preacher also needs *to explain and convince the congregation of God's unfailing love for the congregation in need* as the text does**.** Consequently, the preacher formulates the following genre-sensitive homiletical purpose for the sermon—*to encourage the congregation in need to pray to and trust in God continuously by explaining and convincing them of God's unfailing love for them.* When the preacher has this genre-sensitive homiletical purpose, he can advance to formulating the message, medium, and mood of the sermon that become the means for accomplishing this genre-sensitive homiletical purpose.

Formulating Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Message, Medium, and Mood

Developing the homiletical message. In conjunction with formulating the homiletical purpose, the preacher articulates the gene-sensitive homiletical message including the timeless theological implications derived from the textual movements and mood in the previous theological process. In this process, the preacher can adjust the overlap of theological/doctrinal propositions into the homiletical ideas. In the case of

Psalm 31, the theological ideas in the first structural/emotional movement (vv. 1-8) are repeated in the second structural/emotional movements (vv. 9-24). Yet the theological ideas in the second movement are elaborated with the double articulation of a theme which emphasizes the believer's faith in a faithful God in times of troubles. Thus, the preacher can modify the repeated theological ideas into the simpler, yet more emphasized, homiletical ideas. Furthermore, in order to communicate the genre-sensitive homiletical message to the specific congregation, the preacher stylizes them into concise and memorable expressions. In addition, if possible, the preacher adds the emotional force of the text into the homiletical ideas with repetitive wordings and patterns, following the textual rhetorical or communicational patterns. When finishing this process, the genre-sensitive homiletical message may emerge as follows:

1. Homiletical Idea (vv. 1-5). In times of troubles, show your faithfulness to God with earnest prayer, believing in God's faithful righteousness.

2. Homiletical Idea (vv. 6-8). In times of troubles, show your faithfulness to God with the total trust of commitment, remembering God's faithful love.

3. Modified Timeless Theological Implication. Your faith journey is not completed with a onetime commitment to God.

4. Homiletical Idea (vv. 9-18). Even in all the severe and continuing trials, show your faithfulness with earnest prayer and even cry out to God, believing in God's faithful righteousness and His faithful love.

5. Homiletical Idea (vv. 21-24). Even in all the severe and continuing trials, show your faithfulness to God with the total trust of commitment and the encouragement of others, remembering God's faithful goodness and unfailing love.

6. Modified Timeless Theological Implication. Your faith journey is a life-time commitment to God, regardless of any circumstantial trial and worries.

7. The Central Homiletical Idea. Even in times of severe and continuing trials, show your faithfulness with earnest prayer and total commitment to God, believing and remembering God's faithfulness.

Designing the homiletical medium. The preacher's genre consideration highly influences the way that he formulates the homiletical medium. In order to transpose the textual impact into the sermon, a genre-sensitive preacher starts by remodeling the biblical author's rhetorical or communicational strategy in determining the homiletical medium.

When the preacher designs the homiletical medium of Psalm 31 with genre-sensitivity, preserving the formal/functional elements or the sequence of the text is one of the best and most natural ways to organize the overall structure of the message. Consequently, an inductive pattern in form is the best option. In this approach, the preacher raises the question in the introduction—how do you face severe and continuing trials in life? The psalmist's repeated formal/functional elements (petition/prayer and praise/trust) in Psalm 31 serve as a case study of the situation posed in the question. Following the structural/emotional movements of the text, the preacher introduces the homiletical ideas as the sermon points in each movement (vv. 1-5, 6-8, 9-18, and 21-24) and he might develop them as he explains, illustrates, and applies them in turn. In other words, the preacher can utilize deductive elements within the overall inductive pattern in order to meet the secondary yet essential purpose of the sermon, namely, to explain and convince of God's unfailing love for the congregation in need. After showing the progression of the psalmist's responses in the face of all the severe trials, the preacher raises the question posed in the introduction and then answers it with the central homiletical idea, namely, *even in times of severe and continuing trials, we should show our faithfulness with the earnest prayer and total commitment to God, believing and remembering God's faithfulness.* At this final movement, the preacher accomplishes the

primary purpose of the sermon, namely, *to encourage the congregation in need to continue to pray to and trust in God*, by appealing to the central homiletical idea with an illustration and by adding primary applications to the central homiletical idea. As a result, the preacher can develop the following homiletical outline:

1. The Homiletical Purpose. To encourage the congregation in need to pray to and trust in God continuously by explaining and convincing of God's unfailing love for them.
2. Introduction. How do you face all the severe and continuing trials in life?
3. Homiletical Idea (vv. 1-5). In times of troubles, show your faithfulness to God with earnest prayer, believing in God's faithful righteousness.
4. Homiletical Idea (vv. 6-8). In times of troubles, show your faithfulness to God with the total trust of commitment, remembering God's faithful love.
5. The First Contemporized Timeless Theological Implication. Your faith journey is not completed with a onetime commitment to God.
6. Homiletical Idea (vv. 9-18). Even in severe and continuing trials, show your Faithfulness with earnest prayer and even cry out to God, believing God's faithful righteousness and His faithful love.
7. Homiletical Idea (vv. 21-24). Even in severe and continuing trials, show your faithfulness to God with the total trust of commitment and the encouragement of others, remembering God's faithful goodness and unfailing love.
8. The Second Contemporized Timeless Theological Implication. Your faith journey is a lifetime commitment to God, regardless of any circumstantial difficulty.
9. The Central Homiletical Idea in Conclusion. Even in times of severe and continuing trials, show your faithfulness with earnest prayer and total commitment to God, believing and remembering God's faithfulness.

Devising the homiletical mood. In order to preach Psalm 31 with genre-sensitivity, the preacher reanimates the textual pathos into the sermon by creating an emotional arch and detailed emotional overtones within the sermon that match the emotional movements and elements of the text.

For reanimating the textual pathos of Psalm 31, the preacher creates two cycles of emotional movements (petition-praise) into the sermonic mood as the text does. As previously outlined, the unique timeless theological implication and communicational impact operate with the emotional movements. Thus, the preacher reanimates the textual pathos in the sermon effectively by articulating the contemporized timeless theological implications derived from the structural/emotional movements of the text at the end of the turning points of the emotional arch for the sermon. In this sense, the introduction of the first homiletical idea serves as the starting point for the first cycle of the emotional arch (petition-praise) of the sermon (vv. 1-8). The articulation of the first contemporized timeless theological implication serves as the concluding point of the first cycle of the emotional arch of the sermon; it also serves as the starting point for the second cycle of the emotional arch of the sermon (vv. 9-24). Finally, the articulation of the second contemporized timeless theological implication, derived from the second emotional movement of the text, is the concluding point of the sermon, and it also leads to the central homiletical idea.

After creating the dominant mood of the sermon by articulating the contemporized theological implications and remodeling the two cycles of the structural/emotional movements of the text into the mood of the sermon, the preacher creates the detailed the emotional overtones of the sermon. In Psalm 31, repeated contrastive images and metaphors between God and trials within the two cycles of emotional arch of the sermon can be useful resources for reinforcing both the primary purpose and the central message of the sermon and thereby adding emotional force to the sermon. For instance, the positive connotation in the attributions of God such as rock,

refuge, and fortress (vv. 1-5) contrasts with the negative metaphor of "hunting" enemies (v. 4) and the various expressions of trials (vv. 9-13). In addition, there is the telling contrastive image between God's hand (into which the psalmist entrusts himself) at the thematically important verses (vv. 5 and 15) and the enemies' hand from which the psalmist is delivered (vv. 8 and 15). In fact, utilizing these metaphors and images can help the preacher both add emotional force to the sermon and direct the congregation to the text.

Formulating Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Parts

Formulating the basic genre-sensitive homiletical elements (the homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood) for Psalm 31, the preacher develops actual sermon parts (explanation, illustration, application, transition, introduction, and conclusion) in consideration of the interrelatedness among these basic genre-sensitive homiletical elements. While being faithful to communicate the homiletical message with clarity and accuracy, a genre-sensitive preacher of Psalm 31 formulates each sermon part, respecting the homiletical medium and mood in order to reflect the unique emotional and experiential quality of the text in the impact of the sermon.

In this vein, the preacher of Psalm 31 formulates the medium-driven sermon parts, honoring the textual structure. He determines the placement and length of each sermon part (explanation, illustration, application, transition, introduction, and conclusion), considering how it can be properly associated with the homiletical medium. Consequently, a preacher's determination of each sermon part is governed by the overall inductive pattern with the two cycles of movements, so that each sermon part facilitates the inductive progression of the sermon in a manner that mirrors the textual movements.

In addition, the preacher formulates mood-driven sermon parts. By echoing the emotional quality of the text, the preacher explains the homiletical ideas with a careful use of evocative, emphatic, sensory, and concrete language, images, and metaphors so that the congregation can be emotionally as well as intellectually connected with the text. In addition, by using specific life-experienced illustrations that mirror the mood of the text, the preacher helps the congregation to understand and experience the biblical truths in a vivid, concrete, and persuasive way. In particular, weaving the mood-driven illustration into the introduction and conclusion can be an effective way to help the congregation's understanding of and emotional identification with the text. Furthermore, the mood-driven transitions and applications help the preacher transpose the textual impact into the sermon.

Although much more can be said about the various ways to formulate sermon parts according to the preacher's creativity and imagination, the bottom line for a genre-sensitive preacher of Psalm 31 is that he must always be attentive to the homiletical message, medium, and mood in formulating each sermon component with a view to recreating the textual dynamics and reanimating the telling impact of Psalm 31.

Establishing the Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Findings

When following this genre-sensitive homiletical process, the preacher can complete the sermon for Psalm 31, honoring the authority and relevance of the biblical communication.[26] By reflecting the textual purpose, message, medium, and mood into the basic sermon framework and actual sermon parts, the preacher can compose a text-driven

[26]For a manuscript for Ps 31, see Appendix 5.

and genre-sensitive sermon that faithfully conveys the biblical author's intended meaning—the believer's faith in a faithful God in the face of trials—with the timeless theological implication and powerful communicative impact employed by the biblical author's intended conceptual and communicational strategy—the repetition and elaboration of the biblical truth in two cycles of structural/emotional movements. When following the previous twelve steps of a genre-sensitive methodology for Psalm 31, the preacher's consideration of genre characteristic and genre-based essentials in the exegetical process does not recede or disappear from view. Instead, the preacher continues to emphasize genre in the following theological and homiletical process in pursuit of communicating the biblical truth both with accurate understanding and with an effective communicational strategy.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Expository preaching requires the preacher to have knowledge of the varied characteristics of biblical genres in order to faithfully and effectively communicate the Word of God. However, relatively less attention has been given to preaching a poetic genre than to preaching other biblical genres. In particular, there has been an absence or avoidance of preaching the lament psalms. Homileticians have neglected the methodological question of how to do justice to the genre characteristics of the lament psalms in a sermon—that is, they have not sought to develop a genre-sensitive expository preaching methodology of the lament psalms. Consequently, the goal of this dissertation is to identify the genre considerations for preaching a lament psalm in the triadic sermon-making process—the exegetical, theological, and homiletical process—and thus to provide hermeneutical and homiletical guidelines for genre-sensitive expository preaching of a lament psalm, in order to both communicate the textual meaning and impact to the contemporary audience.

To accomplish this purpose, in the first chapter I attempted to identify the definitional nature, criteria, and function of genre, in order to grasp fully the definition and qualifications of genre-sensitive preaching. A proper understanding of the nature, criteria and function of a genre demonstrate that genre-sensitive expository preaching should honor the biblical author's holistic communicational or rhetorical strategies by

reflecting the genre-based textual elements (the message, medium, and mood of the text) and the genre-based contextual element (the purpose) throughout the triadic sermon-making process in accordance with the interlocking nature of these genre-essentials. With this qualification, this study further emphasized the necessity of a genre-sensitive expository preaching methodology for preaching the lament psalms by examining the current difficulties, deficiencies, and defective methodologies of preaching the lament psalms. In addition, I discussed the necessity and importance of this study by clarifying that the genre-sensitive preaching methodology of this dissertation is founded in the basic theological, hermeneutical, and homiletical convictions of expository preaching—a high view of Scripture, author-centered hermeneutic, and transformational communication. This chapter also clarified the methodology and terminology used in this study.

Chapter 2 focused on the exegetical process for preaching a lament psalm. This chapter began with the necessity of a holistic exegetical method that requires not only the analysis of the textual message and medium but also the analysis and appreciation of the textual mood. In conjunction with the structural/thematic analysis of the lament psalms, I proposed an emotional approach as a crucial interpretive tool. An emotional approach allows a preacher to analyze fully and appreciate the meaning and effect of the Psalms by elucidating the innate emotional intents, elements (literary types, parallelism, poetic language and imagery, and superscripts), and movements which the biblical author embodied in the text.

Having established the necessity of a holistic method for preaching a lament psalm that analyzes its genre essentials (the purpose, message, medium, and mood of the text), I next delineated a step-by-step procedure for holistic genre-sensitive preaching.

The first step is the preliminary study of the text and context of a chosen lament psalm. In this step, the preacher needs to select and delimit a lament psalm as a preaching unit. For genre-sensitive preaching, it is important to select a whole lament psalm as a self-contained unit. With the translation, preliminary grammatical and syntactical studies, reading, and meditation upon the chosen text, the preacher also needs to survey the possible contexts of the chosen text, which can help him conduct a more text-oriented analysis of the text.

The second step is to analyze the psalm's semantic meaning and textual organization. This step follows the medium-focused, the message-focused, and the mood-focused analyses. The purpose of the medium-focused linear analysis is to sketch a big picture of a lament psalm by examining the lines, colons, structural patterns (linear pattern), and arrangements. The message-focused related analysis is to uncover the thematic point of each unit and seeks to see the related themes of the text in detail. In particular, preachers can helpfully recognize three thematic dimensions toward the psalmist himself, God, and other people (enemies) to draw the thematic details of a lament psalm. Based upon the previous analyses, the mood-focused analysis helps the preacher discern the distinguishing emotional and experiential dimensions of a lament by isolating the overall dynamic movements of the text and the depicted emotions and experiences within the movements. This mood-focused analysis also enables the preacher to verify the appropriateness of the previous medium-focused and message-focused analyses and to integrate them.

The third step is to analyze the pragmatic aspects—the communicational purpose and effect of the text. In this step, the preacher needs to suggest the plausible

historical, categorical, and literary contexts that fit the previous analyses of the semantic meaning and textual organization in order to clarify the communicational purpose and effect of the text. The preacher must discern and honor the biblical author's intended communicational purpose and effect by recognizing the limits of contextualizing a lament psalm. In this respect, utilizing speech-act theory and its categories in accordance with the previous analyses of the message, medium, and mood of the text can help the preacher understand the communicational purpose and effect of the text as a communicational act.

The final step is to ascertain genre-sensitive exegetical findings discovered during the previous exegetical steps. The preacher can derive two basic exegetical products—the author's intended meaning and purpose (the message and purpose of the text) and the author's designed textual organization (the medium and mood of the text).

Chapter 3 centered on the theological process for preaching the lament psalm. This chapter started by stressing the necessity of genre considerations in the theological process in order to communicate the timeless biblical truths and biblical impact to the contemporary audience. I utilized and modified Warren's model of theological process that mainly focuses on principlizing the universal truth of the text on the conceptual level, arguing for the broader goal of a theological process that includes discerning the timeless theological implication and communicational impact of the genre characteristics of the text on the communicational level. Since the genre characteristics of the text are the biblical author's unique yet transcultural conceptual and communicational strategy, the preacher needs to recognize it and preserve its timeless implication and communicational impact in the principlizing process with a view to enabling the contemporary audience

not only to understand the biblical truths of the text but also to experience the dynamics and impact of a lament psalm.

Given the necessity of a holistic theological process that requires of the preacher's investigation into genre characteristics of a lament psalm, I proposed a step-by-step genre-sensitive theological procedure for a lament psalm. The first step is to develop the theological/doctrinal big idea(s) through the stylizing and theologizing process. In the stylizing process, the preacher can modify the exegetical ideas into timeless and universal principles. In the theologizing process, the preacher summarizes the theological motifs and themes of the text at the textual horizon. He then studies the biblical theology of the text in consideration of the proper connections between the earlier expression of biblical theology and their counterparts in the progress of biblical revelation at the biblical/canonical horizon. Finally, he verifies the timeless theological/doctrinal propositions at the systematic theological horizon. During these three basic theologizing movements, it is important for the preacher to identify and maintain a coherent covenantal theological framework of a lament psalm that helps the preacher not only discover the theological/doctrinal ideas of the text but also infer the theological/Christological significance of the text.

The second step is to discern the timeless theological implication and communicational impact by examining the particular genre characteristic of a lament psalm. The genre characteristic is usually dependent upon unique structural/emotional elements and movements within a lament psalm. There are typical formal/functional elements of the lament psalms: invocation, petition, complaint, confession, imprecation, profession, and praise. An actual investigation into the particular formal/functional

elements used in the text, however, can help the preacher see these elements as constituent parts of the biblical author's designed avenue for both describing the unique theological motifs and messages of the text and communicating the distinguishing impact of the text. Furthermore, an examination of the distinguishing structural/emotional movements of a lament psalm provides the preacher with a unique timeless implication and communicational channel from theological and communicational perspectives. In this respect, this study presented the typical patterns of the structural/emotional movements of the lament psalms—(1) from lament to praise, (2) from praise to lament, (3) the return to lament even after praise, (4) the alternation between lament and praise, and (5) and absence of movements—and also provided their unique timeless theological implications—(1) God answers prayer and delivers the lamenters, (2) the believer's faith sometimes does not have answers, (3) the believer's faith journey is a long process, (4) despite the believer's experience of God's answer and deliverance, his life of faith still has ambiguity and tension, and (5) faith does not always resolve the problems of life.

The third step is to organize the theological/doctrinal big ideas with the timeless implication of the genre characteristic of the text in order to reflect the communicational impact of the text. After outlining the theological/doctrinal big idea(s) in the flow of the text, the preacher needs to arrange the timeless theological implication of the text's genre characteristics in consideration of the structural/emotional movements. In this way, the theological outline can best convey the theological/doctrinal propositions with the unique yet timeless theological implication and communicational impact to the contemporary audience.

The final step is to establish genre-sensitive theological findings. The preacher

should confirm the theological/doctrinal ideas of a lament psalm developed through the stylizing and theologizing process. In addition, the preacher needs to identify the unique yet timeless theological implication and communicational impact of the genre characteristic of the text with the aim of honoring the relevance of biblical communication. Finally, the preacher should have a theological outline that can best reflect the timeless biblical truths and impact.

Chapter 4 discussed the homiletical process for preaching a lament psalm. This discussion began with the necessity of a holistic homiletical process that reflects the genre-based essentials (the purpose, message, medium, and mood) of a lament psalm in the formation of the basic homiletical framework (the homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood) and the actual sermon parts (explanation, illustration, application, transition, conclusion, and introduction). In accordance with the interlocking nature of genre-based essentials, I examined the necessity of formulating the homiletical purpose, message, medium, and mood as the basic homiletical framework for genre-sensitive expository preaching of a lament psalm. I also explained the holistic and organic integration of purpose, message, medium, and mood in crafting genre-sensitive sermon parts.

Given the necessity of a holistic homiletical process for genre-sensitive expository preaching of a lament psalm that reflects genre-based essentials into the basic homiletical framework and actual sermon parts, this study provided its step-by-step procedure. The first step is to formulate the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose. In this step, the preacher needs to analyze the immediate audience in two-way directional approaches (from the text to the congregation and from the congregation to the text) in

order to articulate the specific homiletical purpose that can be compatible both with the textual purpose and the congregation's needs. In particular, based upon the legitimate contextual parallel between the text and contemporary audience, the preacher should reflect the multiple and prioritized purposes or directions of the text (cognitive, emotional, and volitional) into the homiletical purposes—that is, the core of the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose. In fact, formulating this genre-sensitive homiletical purpose affects the entire genre-sensitive homiletical process and enables the audience to understand the text and to respond as the text guides.

The second step is to formulate the genre-sensitive homiletical message, medium, and mood. In order to attain the genre-sensitive homiletical purpose, the preacher needs to carefully formulate the homiletical message, medium, and mood in a genre-sensitive manner. First, while keeping the centrality of communicating the biblical truths, the preacher needs to express the theological/doctrinal ideas in concise and memorable sentence(s). Furthermore, he can add emotional force to the homiletical ideas through the stylizing process in consideration of the distinguishing genre characteristic of the text—the genre-sensitive homiletical message. Second, the preacher's recognition of the text's genre characteristics highly influences the determination of the homiletical medium (sermon structure). When following the narrative potential and flow of the text and thus remodeling the formal/functional elements and movements into the homiletical medium, an overall inductive pattern with some deductive elements best fits for designing the homiletical medium of a lament psalm in order to recreate the textual impact into the sermon—the genre-sensitive homiletical medium. Third, in conjunction with the homiletical medium, the preacher also needs to develop the homiletical mood by

creating an emotional arch that matches the structural/emotional movements of the text, and by crafting detailed emotional overtones in the sermon with the use of evocative language, images and metaphors which can intensify the emotional force to the contemporary audience—the genre-sensitive homiletical mood.

The third step is to formulate genre-sensitive sermon parts. While paying attention to the interrelatedness of the genre-sensitive basic homiletical framework, the preacher can develop genre-sensitive explanation, illustration, application, introduction, conclusion, and transition. While developing each sermon component for the accurate and clear communication of the homiletical message, the preacher also needs to consider the placement and amount of each sermon part—the medium-driven genre-sensitive sermon part and its emotional quality, the mood-driven genre-sensitive sermon part.

The final step is to establish genre-sensitive homiletical findings. When following the previous homiletical process, the preacher joins the basic genre-sensitive compositional framework and actual sermon parts. When a sermon is composed in consideration of the interrelatedness of genre-based essentials, the complete sermon, guided by the textual purpose, message, medium, and mood, can faithfully and effectively convey the textual meaning and impact, honoring the authority and relevance of biblical communication.

Chapter 5 exemplified the proposed genre-sensitive expository preaching methodology for the lament psalms by providing a case study of Psalm 31. After explaining the reasons for choosing Psalm 31 as a case study, I elucidated the twelve steps for this methodology and thus provided the genre-sensitive exegetical, theological, and homiletical findings of Psalm 31 in order to test and prove the validity of this

methodology.

This study provides three potential benefits. First, it simply emphasizes the philosophy and importance of text-driven preaching by honoring the authority and relevance of biblical communication and thus prioritizing the text in the entire sermon-making preparation. Second, this study helps readers understand the nature of genre-sensitive preaching. With explanations of the definitional nature, criteria, and communicational function of genre, it provides proper qualification of genre-sensitive preaching in general and thus provides a corrective measure for current deficient and defective genre-sensitive preaching methodologies. Third, this study provides a systematic procedure for analyzing and revitalizing the genre characteristics of the lament psalms in contemporary preaching with the aim of recovering the lament psalms in biblical preaching.

I expect that this genre-sensitive preaching methodology can be a helpful and practical tool for text-driven preachers who seek to communicate the lament psalms to the contemporary audience with the biblical author's intended meaning and impact. As a result, the contemporary congregation can listen to the biblical message with the biblical impact, surrendering to the text.

APPENDIX 1

CATALOG OF LAMENT PSALMS BY SCHOLARS

Table A1. Catalog of lament psalms by scholars

A.W[1]	B.A[2]	C.W[3]	E.G[4]	H.G/J.B[5]	L.S[6]	W.Be[7]	W.Br[8]
3 (IL)	3 (IL)	3 (IL)	3 (IL)	3 (IL)		3 (IL)	3 (IL)
	4 (IL)	4 (IL)	4 (IL)			4 (IL)	4 (IL)
5 (IL) im	5 (IL) im	5 (IL) im	5 (IL) im	5 (IL) im	5 (IL) im	5 (IL) im	5 (IL) im
6(IL) im	6 (IL) im	6 (IL) im	6 (IL) im	6 (IL) im	6 (IL) im	6 (IL) im	6 (IL) im
7 (IL) im	7 (IL) im	7 (IL) im	7 (IL) im	7 (IL) im	7 (IL) im	7 (IL) im	7 (IL) im
9-10 (IL)	9-10 (IL)	10 (IL)	10 (IL)		10 (IL)		10 (IL)
			11 (IL)				
	12 (CL)		12 (IL)			12 (CL)	
13 (IL)	13 (IL)	13 (IL)	13 (IL)	13 (IL)		13 (IL)	
	14 (IL)	14 (IL)				14 (CL)	
17 (IL)	17 (IL)	17 (IL)	17 (IL)	17 (IL)	17 (IL)	17 (IL)	17 (IL)

IL = Individual Lament
CL = Communcal Lament
PS = Penitential (Individual Lament) Psalm
im = Imprecation Included

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[1]Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 66-83.

[2]B. W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 239-42.

[3]Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 173-83.

[4]Erhard S. Gersternbeger, *Psalms, Part 1 with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 14.

[5]Hermann Gunkel and J. Begrich, *An Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, trans. James D. Nogalski (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 120.

[6]Leopold Sabourin, *The Psalms* (New York: Alba House, 1970), 443-45.

[7]W. H. Bellinger Jr., *Psalms* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 45.

[8]Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 58-77.

Table A1—Continued. Catalog of lament psalms by scholars

A.W	B.A	C.W	E.G	H.G/J.B	L.S	W.Be	W.Br
22 (IL)	22 (IL)	22 (IL)	22 (IL)	22 (IL)	22 (IL)	22 (IL)	22 (IL)
		23 (IL)					
25 (IL)	25 (IL)	25 (IL)	25 (CL)	25 (IL)	25 (IL)	25 (IL)	25 (IL)
38 (PS)	38 (PS)	38 (PS)	38 (PS)	38 (PS)	38 (PS)	38 (PS)	38 (PS)
39 (IL)	39 (IL)	39 (IL)	39 (IL)	39 (IL)	39 (IL)	39 (IL)	39 (IL)
	40 (IL) im	40 (IL) im	40 (IL) im	40 (IL) im		40 (IL) im	
	41(IL)	41(IL)	41(IL)				
42-43 (IL)	42-43 (IL)	42-43 (IL)	42-43 (IL)	42-43 (IL)	42-43 (IL)	42-43 (IL)	42-43 (IL)
44 (CL)	44 (CL)	44(CL)	44 (CL)	44 (CL)	44 (CL)	44(CL)	44(CL)
51 (PS)	51 (PS)	51 (PS)	51 (PS)	51 (PS)	51 (PS)	51 (PS)	51 (PS)
	52 (IL)	52 (IL)				52 (IL)	
	53 (IL)	53 (IL)				53 (CL)	
54 (IL) im	54 (IL) im	54 (IL) im	54 (IL) im	54 (IL) im	54 (IL) im	54 (IL) im	54 (IL) im
55 (IL) im	55 (IL) im	55 (IL) im	55 (IL) im	55 (IL) im	55 (IL) im	55 (IL) im	55 (IL) im
56 (IL) im	56 (IL) im	56 (IL) im	56 (IL) im	56 (IL) im	56 (IL) im	56 (IL) im	56 (IL) im
57 (IL)	57 (IL)	57 (IL)	57 (IL)	57 (IL)	57 (IL)	57 (IL)	57 (IL)
	58 (CL)					58 (CL)	
59 (IL) im	59 (IL) im	59 (IL) im	59 (IL) im	59 (IL) im	59 (IL) im	59 (IL) im	59 (IL) im
	60 (CL)	60 (CL)	60 (CL)		60 (CL)	60 (CL)	
61 (IL)	61 (IL)	61 (IL)	61 (IL)	61 (IL)	61 (IL)	61 (IL)	61 (IL)
		62 (IL)				62 (IL)	
63(IL) im	63(IL) im	63 (IL) im	63(IL) im	63 (IL) im	63 (IL) im	63 (IL) im	
64(IL) im	64(IL) im	64 (IL) im	64 (IL) im	64 (IL) im	64 (IL) im	64 (IL) im	64 (IL) im
69(IL) im	69(IL) im	69 (IL) im	69 (IL) im	69 (IL) im	69 (IL) im	69 (IL) im	69 (IL) im
	70 (IL) im		70 (IL) im	70 (IL) im	70 (IL) im	70 (IL) im	70 (IL) im
71(IL) im	71 (IL) im	71 (IL) im	71 (IL) im	71 (IL) im	71 (IL) im	71 (IL) im	71 (IL) im

IL = Individual Lament
CL = Communcal Lament
PS = Penitential (Individual Lament) Psalm
im = Imprecation Included

Table A1—Continued. Catalog of Lament Psalms by Scholars

A.W	B.A	C.W	E.G	H.G/J.B	L.S	W.Be	W.Br
74 (CL) im	74 (CL) im	74 (CL) im		74 (CL) im	74 (CL) im	74 (CL) im	74 (CL) im
77 (IL)	77 (IL)	77 (IL)				77 (IL)	77 (IL)
79 (CL) im	79 (CL) im	79 (CL) im		79 (CL) im	79 (CL) im	79 (CL) im	79 (CL) im
80 (CL)	80 (CL)	80 (CL)		80 (CL)	80 (CL)		
83 (CL) im	83 (CL) im	83 (CL) im		83 (CL) im			
	85 (CL)		85 (CL)		85 (CL)	85 (CL)	
86 (IL)	86 (IL)		86 (IL)	86 (IL)	86 (IL)	86 (IL)	86 (IL)
88 (IL)	88 (IL)		88 (IL)	88 (IL)	88 (IL)	88 (IL)	
	89 (CL)	89 (CL)	89 (CL)		89 (CL)		
	90 (CL)					90 (CL)	
94 (CL)		94 (CL)	94 (CL)			94 (IL)	
102 (PS)	102 (PS)	102 (PS)	102 (PS)	102 (PS)	102 (PS)	102 (PS)	102 (PS)
106 (CL)						106 (CL)	
			108 (CL)			108 (CL)	
109 (IL) im	109 (IL) im	109 (IL) im	109 (IL) im	109 (IL) im	109 (IL) im	109 (IL) im	109 (IL) im
120 (IL)	120 (IL)	120 (IL)	120 (IL)	120 (IL)	120 (IL)	120 (IL)	120 (IL)
123 (CL)	123 (CL)				123 (CL)	123 (CL)	
	126 (CL)					126 (CL)	
	129 (CL) im						
130 (PS)	130 (PS)	130 (PS)	130 (PS)	130 (PS)	130 (PS)	130 (PS)	130 (PS)
137 (CL) im	137 (CL) im		137 (CL) im		137 (CL) im	137 (CL) im	137 (CL) im
140 (IL) im	140 (IL) im		140 (IL) im	140 (IL) im	140 (IL) im	140 (IL) im	140 (IL) im
141 (IL) im	141 (IL) im		141 (IL) im	141 (IL) im	141 (IL) im	141 (IL) im	141 (IL) im
142 (IL)	142 (IL)	142 (IL)	142 (IL)	142 (IL)	142 (IL)	142 (IL)	142 (IL)
143 (PS) im	143 (PS) im		143 (PS) im	143 (PS) im	143 (PS) im	143 (PS) im	143 (PS) im

IL = Individual Lament
CL = Communcal Lament
PS = Penitential (Individual Lament) Psalm
im = Imprecation Included

APPENDIX 2

A LIST OF FORMAL/FUNTIONAL ELEMENTS
OF LAMENT PSALMS

Table A2. A list of formal/functional
elements of lament psalms

Ps	Invocation	Complaint	Petition	Confession Innocence	Imprecation	Profession Confidence	Praise
3	v. 1	vv. 1-2	v. 7			vv. 3-7	v. 8
4	v. 1	vv. 2, 6	vv. 1,6			vv. 3-5, 7-8	
5	vv. 1-2	vv. (4-6), 9	vv. 1-3, 8-10		v. 10	vv. 4-6, 11	vv. 7, 12
6	vv. 1-3	vv. 1-3, 5-7	v. 4		v. 9	vv. 8-10	
7	vv. 1-2		vv. 6-9	vv. 3-5	v. 16	vv. 10-16	v. 17
9[1]			vv. 3-4, 9-20			vv. 3-9	vv.1-2
10	v. 1	vv.1-11, 13	v. 12		v. 15	vv.14, 16-18	
12	vv. 1-2	vv. 1-4, 8	v. 1			vv. 5-6, 7	
13	vv. 1-2	vv. 1-2	vv. 3-4			v. 5	v. 6
17	v. 1	vv. 10-12	vv. 6-9, 13-14	vv. 3-5		vv.7, 15	
22	vv. 1-2	vv.1-2, 6-8, 12-18	vv. 11, 19-21			vv. 3-5, 9-10, 21, 24	vv. 22-31
25	vv. 1-2		vv. 4-6, 16-22	vv. 7, 11, 18		vv. 3, 8-10, 12-15	
26	v. 1		vv. 9-11	vv. 4-7		vv. 8, 11	v. 12
27	v. 7		vv.7-9, 11-12			vv. 1-5, 8, 10, 13-14	v. 6
28	vv. 1-2	vv. 3-5	vv. 1, 2, 3, 9				
31	v. 1	vv. 4, 9-13	vv. 1-5, 14-18		vv. 17-18	vv. 6-8, 19-20	vv. 21-24

[1]Though Ps 9 and Ps 10 appear as two separate psalms in the English Bible, these psalms are actually one psalm as an acrostic psalm (aleph-keph).

Table A2—Continued. A list of formal/functional elements of lament psalms

Ps	Invocation	Complaint	Petition	Confession Innocence	Imprecation	Profession Confidence	Praise
35	vv. 1-2	vv. 7, 11-17, 20-21	vv. 1-8, 19, 22-27		vv. 3-6, 8, 26	vv. 9-10, 18	v. 28
38	vv. 1-2	vv. 3-12, 17, 19-20	vv. 1-2, 21-22	v. 4, 13-14, 18		v.v 15-16	
39	v. 4	vv. 1-3, 9	vv. 4, 8, 12-13			vv. 5-7, 11	
40		v. 12	vv. 11, 13, 16-17		vv. 14-15	vv. 8-10	vv. 1-7
41		vv. 5-9				vv. 1-4, 10-11	vv. 12-13
42	vv. 1, 6	vv. 2-4, 6-7, 9-10				v. 8	vv. 5, 11
43	v. 1	vv. 1-2	v. 3			v. 4	v. 5
44	v. 4	vv. 9-16, 23-26		vv. 17-22		vv.1-3, 4-8, 17	
51	v. 1		vv. 2, 7-12, 18	vv. 3-6		vv. 13, 17	vv. 14-19
54	vv. 1-2	v. 3	vv. 1-2, 5			vv. 4, 7	v. 6
55	v. 1	vv. 2-14, 19-21	vv. 1, 9		vv. 9, 15	vv. 16-18, 19, 22-23	
56	v. 1	vv. 1-2, 5-6, 8			v. 7	vv. 3-4, 9-11, 12-13	
57	vv. 1-3	vv. 4, 6				vv. 7-10	vv. 5, 11
59	v. 1	vv. 6-7, 12, 14-15	v. 2	vv. 3-4	vv. 11, 13	vv. 8-10	vv. 16-17
60	v. 1	vv. 2-3	vv. 5, 11			vv. 4, 6-8, 12	
61	v. 1, 5	v. 2	vv. 6-7			vv. 3-5	v. 8
63	v. 1	vv. 1-2			vv. 9-10	vv. 3-8	v. 11
64	v. 1	vv. 3-6	v. 2		vv. 7-9		v. 10
69	v. 1	vv. 2-12, 19-21	vv. 13-18		vv. 22-25, 27-28		vv. 30-36
70	v. 1		v. 5		vv. 2-3		v. 4
71	vv. 1, 12	vv. 10-11	vv. 2-4, 9, 12, 18		v. 13	vv. 5-8, 19-21	vv. 14-16, 22-24

Table A2—Continued. A list of formal/functional elements of lament psalms

Ps	Invocation	Complaint	Petition	Confession Innocence	Imprecation	Profession Confidence	Praise
74	vv. 1-2	vv. 3-11	vv. 18-23			vv. 12-17	
79	v. 1	vv. 2-5	vv. 8-11		vv. 6, 12	v. 13	
80	vv. 1-2	vv. 4-6, 12-13	vv. 3, 7, 14, 17, 19		v. 16	vv. 8-11, 15	v. 18
83	v. 1	vv. 2-8			vv. 9-17		v. 18
85	vv. 1-3	vv. 5-6	vv. 4, 7-8			vv. 9-13	
86	vv. 1-2	v. 14	vv. 3-4, 6, 11, 16-17			vv. 5, 8-10, 12-13, 15	
88	vv. 1-2	vv. 3-18					
89		vv. 38-51				vv. 1-37	vv. 5-7, 52
94	vv. 1-2	vv. 3-8, 20-21				vv. 9-19, 22-23	
102	vv. 1-2	vv. 3-11, 23-24		vv. 3-6		vv. 12-14, 25-27	v. 28
109	vv. 1-2	vv. 3-5, 22-24	vv. 21, 26		vv. 6-20, 27-29	vv. 30-31	
120	vv. 1-2	vv. 3-7					
123	vv. 1-2	vv. 3-4	v. 3				
130	vv. 1-2	v. 3		v. 3		vv. 4-8	
137	v. 7	vv. 1-6			vv. 8-9		
140	v.1	vv. 2-5	v. 4;7		vv. 10-11	vv. 6-7, 12-13	
141	vv. 1-2	vv. 5-6	vv. 3-4, 9		vv. 7, 10	v. 8	
142	v. 5	vv. 1-4	v. 6			v. 7	
143	v. 1	vv. 2-4	vv. 7-11	v. 2	vv. 12	vv. 5-6	

APPENDIX 3

CATALOG OF FIVE PATTERNS OF STRUTURAL AND EMOTIONAL MOVEMENTS IN LAMENT PSALMS

Table A3. Catalog of five patterns of structural/emotional movements in lament psalms

Patterns of Structural/Emotional Movements	Lists of Lament Psalms				
Lament-Praise	Ps 3	Ps 4	Ps 5	Ps 6	Ps 7
	Ps 13	Ps 17	Ps 22	Ps 25	Ps 26
	Ps 28	Ps 35	Ps 39	Ps 43	Ps 51
	Ps 54	Ps 55	Ps 56	Ps 57	Ps 60
	Ps 61	Ps 63	Ps 64	Ps 69	Ps 70
	Ps 74	Ps 79	Ps 80	Ps 83	Ps 85
	Ps 86	Ps 94	Ps 102	Ps 109	Ps 130
	Ps 140	Ps 141	Ps 143		
Praise-Lament	Pss 9-10	Ps 27	Ps 40	Ps 41	Ps 44
	Ps 89				
Lament-Praise-Lament	Ps 12				
Lament-Praise-Lament-Praise	Ps 31	Ps 35	Ps 42	Ps 59	Ps 71
Lament	Ps 38	Ps 88	Ps 120	Ps 123	Ps 137

APPENDIX 4

TWELVE STEPS FOR PREACHING A LAMENT
PSALM WITH GENRE-SENSITIVITY

The Exegetical Process

1. Preliminary Study of the Text and Survey of the Contexts

2. Analyzing the Semantic Meaning and Textual Organization

   (1) The Medium-Focused Linear Analysis
   (2) The Message-Focused Relational Analysis
   (3) The Mood-Focused Integrative Analysis

3. Analyzing the Pragmatic Aspects (Communicational Purpose and Effect) of the Text

   (1) Suggesting the Contexts for a Wide Communicational Purpose
   (2) Discerning the Communicational Purpose and Effect of the Text

4. Establishing Genre-Sensitive Exegetical Findings

The Theological Process

5. Developing Theological/Doctrinal Big Idea(s)

   (1) Paraphrasing the Exegetical Propositions in General and Universal Terms
   (2) Articulating the Theological/Doctrinal Big Idea(s) through Theologizing Process

6. Discerning Genre Characteristics: Its Timeless Theological Implication and Communicational Impact

   (1) Considering the Textual Elements at the Theological/Communicational Level
   (2) Considering the Textual Movements at the Theological/Communicational Level

7. Organizing the Theological/Doctrinal Big Idea(s) with Timeless Implication and Impact of Genre Characteristics

8. Establishing Genre-Sensitive Theological Findings

The Homiletical Process

9. Formulating Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Purpose

    (1) Analyzing the Immediate Audience
    (2) Articulating Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Purpose

10. Formulating Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Message, Medium, and Mood

    (1) Developing the Homiletical Message
    (2) Designing the Homiletical Medium
    (3) Devising the Homiletical Mood

11. Formulating Genre-Sensitive Actual Sermon Parts

    (1) Developing Genre-Sensitive Explanation, Illustration, Application
    (2) Developing Genre-Sensitive Transitions, Introduction, and Conclusion

12. Establishing Genre-Sensitive Homiletical Findings

APPENDIX 5

A SERMON MANUSCRIPT OF PSALM 31
WITH NOTATION OF SERMON PARTS

Introduction

You might have experienced unexpected rain and thunder that broke and ruined your plan or your journey. Few are those who, at one time or another, do not experience unexpected and undeserved sufferings and difficulties on their life journey. Probably, at the superficial level we all agree that a life is full of turmoil. However, what if these sufferings and difficulties are really going to happen in your health, career, family, and relationships? Do you really love and trust God today in a way that will hold up if tomorrow falls apart? In times of trouble, are you growing in your trust and love for the Lord or are you mainly trying to make life work?

Explanation

Psalm 31 is one of the psalms that the Holy Spirit inspired King David to write. Many people think that David was the great king of Israel. He put an end to the nation's struggles with the Philistines. He conquered Jerusalem and made it the capital city of Israel. He established the foundation of the golden age of Israel. Yet we should remember that his life, which led to such accomplishments, was also a life full of physical, mental, emotional, relational, and spiritual turmoil. Psalm 31 was one of the lament psalms David wrote when he had these difficulties. What does David do first and where does he go first when he has a very strenuous and challenging time?

Let's read Psalm 31:1-5. David is engaging in fervent prayer before the Lord his God. The first words of the psalm tell us that when his life was in distress, he knew the right place he has to go. *"In you, O Lord, do I take refuge"*(v. 1). In distress, he is before God. David is requesting God's help and deliverance because there are snaring enemies who set the traps for David (v. 4). So, he cries out for God*, "let me never be put to shame"* (v.1), *"rescue me speedily"* (v.2), and *"take me out of the net"*(v. 4). However, David's earnest prayer is not out of doubt, but out of confidence. Even in a time of desperation, he does not forget who God is. The text shows David's security and confidence in God. This is seen in his description of God *"In you, O Lord, do I take refuge"* (v. 1), *"Be a rock of refuge for me"* (v. 2), *"you are my rock and my fortress"* (v. 3), and *"you are my refuge"* (v. 4). He is using every graphic word of Hebrew language, "refuge, rock, and fortress" he can find to sing of the security in his Great God. To him, God is his refuge, his rock, and his fortress even in a time of desperation. He believes that only God can give true security. In addition, David believes that God is righteous (v. 1) and faithful (v. 5), and that God leads and guides His people for His name's sake (v. 3). David shows confidence in a righteous and faithful God. Thus, he makes a confident confession by singing, *"Into your hand, I commit my spirit"*(v. 5). This expression shows us David's total dependence upon and total trust in God. David finds his confidence in God more than anything. He finds his security and confidence in God Himself rather than David himself.

Illustration

I was recently asked in an email from one of the congregation if he had to stop smoking to become a Christian. I emailed back and said, "No, you need to stop trusting in

yourself and your activities, and you need to start trusting in Jesus Christ." He emailed back overjoyed, that he could put his faith and trust in Christ as his Lord and Savior.

Perhaps the time of trouble is the time of testing, to see what you are standing on—the rock and foundation of God or the foundation of the world you made. In times of troubles, show your faithfulness to God with earnest prayer, believing God's faithful righteousness. The security and confidence in God instead of yourself is at the heart of the Christian faith. Spurgeon says, "Let us therefore shun mistrust; doubt is death, trust alone is life. Let us make sure that we trust the Lord, and never take our trust on trust." However, we must remember that the great faith and confidence shown by David does not in anyway diminish the pain and agony of his trial. The pain and anxiety is still there. However, he is able to set his eyes upon God. How can he do that?

Explanation

The next passage (vv. 6-8) explains this question. It tells that he could commit himself to God because of God's steadfast love he has received. This passage tells that the expression of David's total dependence upon God—*"Into your hand, I commit my spirit"* (v. 5)—can only made when he really knows *"the faithful God"* (v. 8), and *"God's steadfast love"* (v. 7). To David, God's faithfulness and steadfast love are not vague concepts but the realities he has already experienced. Here we see that as he expresses his thankful resolution toward his God—*"I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love"* (v. 7), we also see David's reflection of how God has shown His steadfast love. David says, *"You have redeemed me"* (v. 5), *"you have seen my affliction"* (v. 7), *"you have known the distress of my soul"*(v. 7), and *"you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; but you have set my feet in a broad place"* (v. 8). The reason that

David can confess, "*Into your hand I commit my spirit"* (v. 5) is because he really believes in the hand of God, His faithfulness, and His steadfast love.

Application

There is a time when we feel entangled and entrapped by the hands of foes and adversities. Even in such situations, we can commit ourselves into the hand of God only when we know that the hand of God has been with us and the firm grasp of God has seized us. Let this encourage you. If you are struggling with a difficulty, discouragement or even depression you have not expected, go to the Lord first and ask Him to help. We are not born with this instinct to turn to God, but when we really understand the faithful God, we can go to God first because our God is the true immovable rock, unassailable fortress, and secure refuge. Perhaps, the time of adveristy is the high time not only to seek for God's help but also to show your faithfulness to the faithful God who has never failed to show his steadfast love to you. In times of trubles, show your faithfulness to God with the total trust of commitment, remembering God's faithful love. However, I am not suggesting that the difficult time can prove to be the time of special blessing. I am not suggesting that we should enjoy the difficult times. But if today is the time of trouble for you, it can be the right time to prove your love of God and grow in total trust and commitment to God, believing that the faithful and ever-loving God is still watching the very trouble you have and He fully knows your anguishing soul.

Transition

Although we agree that we must have assurance in a faithful God and thus depend upon him in the face of an unexpected hardship, there are moments, sometimes years, when he or she comes under extremely great anguish. More than merely an

external hardship, these are the moments in our lives when all sides of our lives appear to be dark and growing darker! We thought once the dark cloud has gone, the drizzling rain would stop. Yet, all of a sudden, the darker clouds have come, the pouring rain starts and even we have to walk in that pouring rain and thunder and lightning. This is not an uncommon life experience at the serious level. If you are honest, you have to agree that our faith journey is not completed with a onetime commitment to the Lord. You have to accept the fact that on the path of the Christian's pilgrimage, there is the reoccurrence of distress, disappointment, and difficulties. Your faith journey is not completed with a onetime commentment to God. The key issue is what are we going to do with these realistic problems?

Explanation

Look at verses 9-13. In these verses, David, who showed his trust in God and commitment to God, still moans in great anguish. *"Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress"* (v. 13). Perhaps, this time is the toughest time in his life. David details the depth of his suffering.

He has physical suffering. He groans, *"my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also"* (v. 9), *and "my bones grow weak"* (v. 10). His health is threatened. This suffering is so intense that he feel his life is closing in around destruction, even death. He has emotional suffering. He moans, *"my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing"* (v. 10). He is crying deeply in his heart. He has spiritual suffering. He confesses, "my strength fails because of my iniquity." This suffering is so intense that he is experiencing first-hand his sinful nature, and as a result, his mortality. He has relational suffering. He cries, *"because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach, especially*

to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances: those who see me in the street flee from me" (v. 11). The suffering is so intense that he feels like his being has been utterly forgotten and totally destroyed like a broken vessel (v. 12). There is also a deadly plot against his life. He mentions, *"I hear the whispering of many; there is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life"* (v. 13).

It is true that that the life of faith often begins with one of these cries: "Deliver me from health problem," "Deliver me from this business reversal," "Deliver me from the darkness of my life." It is also true that on the path of our faith journey, whenever we meet times of trouble, we should go before God and fervently pray for him to help. However, what if your prayer is not answered or not answered in the way you desire? What comfort is there for you if you are still deeply suffering in such extreme difficulties?

Look at verses 14-15. Despite these extreme sufferings, the threat of physical death, the emotional anguish, the spiritual suffering, and the relational isolation, David declares, *"But I trust in you, O Lord, I say, "You are my God." "My times are in your hand"* (vv. 14-15). Here we see David's faithfulness, his firmness, his endurance, his firmed resolve to total trust in and commitment to God in the midst of severe, intense, and continuing trials. As he confessed in verse 5, *"Into your hand, I commit my spirit,"* David again declares, *"You are my God." "My times are in your hand."*

We should not misunderstand here. David is still on the path of *a struggling faith journey*. Look at verses 16-18. He is desperately asking for God's deliverance, *"Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love!"* (v. 16) He is asking for God's justice and righteousness, *"let me not be put to shame, for I call upon you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them go silently to Sheol"* (v. 17), *and "let the*

lying lips be mute which speak insolently against the righteous in pride and contempt" (v. 18). He is fervently praying and asking for God's help.

However, we also see that he is on the path of *a confident struggling*, because he believes in God's steadfast love and His righteousness. Because of God's steadfast love, even when facing extreme difficulties, David holds fast to the fixed principle. *"In your hand, I commit my spirit"* and *"My times are in your hand."* This kind of trust in the steadfast, never-ceasing love of God results in the praise to the living God in every circumstance of life. Look at verses 19-20. He even praises God's abundant goodness and his assuring presence in the extreme situation. Those outside Christ can never know the power of God's unfailing love and His presence in the darkest of times and places. Look at verses 21-24. Having the firm assurance in God's steadfast love and faithfulness (vv. 21-22), he even encourages and challenges us to love the Lord, trust the Lord, and wait for the Lord!

Christians in every society experience severe and continuing trials. They experience sudden threat to life, sudden losses of family members, sudden break-up in relationships. There are suffering Christians living under governments hostile to Christianity. Even in severe and continuing trials, if you are Christian, you should show your faithlfulnes with earnest prayer and even cry out to God, believing God's faithful righteousness and His faithful love. The times of severe and continuing trials are the times that you should show your faithfulness to God with the total trust of commitment. You might ask me what kind of value such severe trials hold for Christians. My honest answer is, I don't know exactly. But there is one thing I am sure of: if there is value in the extreme suffering, it is that it forces the believer to make a choice: total trust or total

despair. The real proof of a right faith journey is not found when life is easy and the requested deliverance is received. As John Calvin says, it is found "when, however fierce the waves are which beat against us, and however sore the assaults by which we are shaken, we hold fast to the fixed principle, that we are constantly under the protection of God, and can say to Him freely, *"You are my God," "Into your hand, I commit my spirit,"* and *"My times are in your hand."*

Illustrations

"Into you hands, I commit my spirit." "My times are in your hand." These sentences are not the words of faith and trust on the lips of David only. When Jesus Christ was suffering physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, Jesus Christ knew what David went through. Jesus Christ knows what you are going through. On the horrific cross, bearing our sins, he said, "Into your hand, I commit my spirit." The total trust and commitment to God!

These are the words the faithful Christains have held fast to on the path of Christian pilgrimage. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, author of the words to the famous song, "Jesus the Very Thought of Thee," died saying "Into your hands, I commit my spirit." The total trust and commitment to God!

John Hus was burnt at the stake in Constance by the Roman Catholic Church for preaching justification by faith alone. At the end of the ceremony of condemning Hus to death by fire, the prisiding bishop condemned, "And now we commit your soul to the devil." To which John Hus calmly said, "I commit my spirit into your hand, Jesus Christ." The total trust and commitment to God!

These words still find their way into the hearts and lips of Christians in extreme suffering today. Even in North Korea, which is the most hostile country to Christianity, there are many sincere and faithful Christians. A Christian defector from North Korea testified about their situations. One of the secrets that keep their community alive is that each member has his or her own number. The person who is the number one leads the small group in his or her own house. When he or she is exposed to the government, he or his family will be executed overnight. Then, the next Christian in line becomes number one and he or she leads the small group continually. Many Christians are still dying for their faith, declaring "Into your hand, I commit my spirit" The total trust and commitment to God!

Applications

Beloved, you will have times of unexpected and undeserved suffering. You might get an unexpected call from your doctor about your health problem.You might get an announcement about coming layoffs because of unnecessary power struggles among your company's executives and realize that your promising career is now in ruins. You might hear the most undesirable news that your child has an accident. You might sense that your best friends and closest neighbors suddenly become total strangers or even enemies. Even in times of severe and continuing trials, if you really know and believe in God's faithfulness and His unfailing love, show your faithfulness with the total commitment to the Lord who showed his faithfulness to us on the Cross of Calvary. "Into your hand, I commit my spirit" and "My times are in your hand."

Conclusion

One irony of Christian truth is that the more true Christianity is tried, the more

it is found to show total trust in and commitment to the Lord alone. When we are getting "crucified," we get better appreciation for the One who really was crucified. Our faith journey is not a one-time commitment, but a lifetime commitment to God, regardless of any circumstantial difficulty. Our faith jouney is not about glory on the earth, at least not yet, because there is heavenly glory to come. When the weight of the world is on your heart, when you are suffering unjustly, when people are talking against you, when you take your last breath in this world, it is your time to show your faithfulness and your total trust and commitment to the faithful God by saying *"Into your hand, I commit my spirit"and "My times are in your hand."* The total trust and commitment to God!

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ABSTRACT

GENRE-SENSITIVE EXPOSITORY PREACHING OF THE LAMENT PSALMS: HONORING THE MESSAGE, MEDIUM, AND MOOD OF THE TEXT

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The primary purpose of this dissertation is to study the necessity of genre consideration in the three important sermon-making process—exegetical, theological, and homiletical—and propose a holistic preaching methodology for the lament psalms with genre-sensitivity.

Chapter 1 discusses the definitional nature, criteria, and communicational function of genre and examines the current defective and deficient preaching method with genre-sensitivity, and also indicates the lack of concern of the lament psalms in biblical preaching.

Chapter 2 examines a holistic exegetical method for preaching a lament psalm by emphasizing the necessity of the analysis and appreciation of the mood of the text based upon the interlocking nature of genre-based textual elements (the message, medium, and mood of the text) and genre-based contextual element (the purpose of the text). This chapter provides a step-by step holistic procedure for preaching a lament psalm with genre-sensitivity.

Chapter 3 investigates the necessity of genre consideration in the theological

process. This section emphasizes that consideration of the genre characteristics is an essential process for discerning a timeless theological implication and communicational impact of a lament psalm. This chapter suggests a step-by-step holistic theological procedure for preaching a lament psalm with genre-sensitivity.

Chapter 4 discusses the necessity of a genre-sensitive homiletical method that reflects the genre-based essentials into the sermon-making process. This section emphasizes the necessity of a holistic integration of the genre-sensitive homiletical components for preaching a lament psalm. This chapter presents a step-by-step procedure for a holistic homiletical method for preaching a lament psalm with genre-sensitivity.

Chapter 5 analyzes Psalm 31as a case study of a genre-sensitive methodology for preaching a lament psalm proposed in the previous chapters. This chapter elaborates and verifies the twelve steps for preaching a lament psalm with genre-sensitivity.

Chapter 6 concludes that biblical preachers need to preach the lament psalms with genre-sensitivity by honoring the message, medium, and mood of the text throughout the entire sermon-making process in pursuit of honoring the authority of the Scripture and remodeling the relevance of the biblical communication.

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