EQUIPPING STUDENTS AT MOORE THEOLOGICAL

COLLEGE TO DEVELOP BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL,

RELEVANT APPLICATION IN PREACHING

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A Project

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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Doctor of Ministry

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by

Paul Steven Grimmond

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APPROVAL SHEET

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RELEVANT APPLICATION IN PREACHING

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For the glory of God

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PREFACE

I am deeply thankful to God for my colleagues and the students at Moore College. My job there is a joy. This project grows out of my love for Jesus, for students, and for God-honoring preaching. I pray that it might further our students' ability to preach God's Word as faithfully and effectively as they can. I am particularly thankful to my colleagues in the Ministry and Mission Department who picked up work to enable me the time and space to work on this project, and to the Principal, Mark Thompson, for financial, moral, and spiritual support. Without that, none of this would have been possible. Finally, I am thankful to the 4th year students from the class of 2022 who participated in the Application Course. Your engagement, sense of humor, deep reflection, and encouragement have been a gift from God.

I am also thankful to my wife Cathy, who is my supporter, encourager, and best friend, and my kids, Anna, Ethan, and Joel. More than anyone, they have born the costs of this project and have done so with grace, kindness, and a sense of humor. I cannot thank you enough, and I love you all very much.

Finally, thank-you to the staff at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for your hard work, constant enthusiasm, grace, and hospitality. I have been so warmly welcomed and encouraged and am thankful to God for your biblical faithfulness and gospel humility. Thanks especially to my supervisor, Brian Vickers, for his encouragement, support, and suggestions for improvement.

Paul Grimmond

Sydney, Australia

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching" (2 Tim 4:1-2).[1] The preacher's task is not simply to share their exegetical work from the pulpit but to preach the living and active Word of God, seeking the goal for which God himself has given his Word, the salvation and transformation into Christ's likeness of all who profess Jesus as Lord. It is essential to train theological students in the skills to apply the Scriptures in a biblically faithful and relevant way as they preach the Word.

Context

The context of this ministry project is Moore Theological College, Sydney, Australia (MTC). MTC is an Anglican training college that regards itself as Evangelical and Reformed. Although the college is Anglican, as many as half of the current students in the three- and four-year training programs for ministry are preparing for ministry outside of an Anglican context. My role in the Ministry and Mission Department involves preparing students to apply their biblical and theological learning across a range of ministry areas including team leadership, evangelism, discipleship, conflict management, self-awareness, and preaching.

The preaching component of the course currently occurs in several different

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the English Standard Version.

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stages. In first year, there is a semester-long subject covering the basics of sermon preparation and delivery. From second year onwards, students spend one semester each year in small proclamation workshops where each student prepares and delivers a sermon which is critiqued by the group. Over their time, students preach from John's gospel, the Old Testament, and a New Testament epistle.

The emphasis of these groups and the emphasis of the entire program is on faithful biblical exegesis and sound doctrine. All upper-year students are required to study the New Testament in Greek, and many of our students (roughly half the students in each year) also study Hebrew and learn to handle the Old Testament in the original language. Students are required to study New Testament, Old Testament, Church History, and Doctrine each year, with some Philosophy and Ministry subjects added in. The curriculum is essentially fixed for all students. Apart from the decision to take Hebrew or another course in its place, there are no electives in the course until the fourth year of study.

The course structure has many strengths, not least of which is the rigor and depth of the exegetical skills developed. Positively, this means that the truth is held in very high regard and most students leave the college placing a high value on "getting the text right" before "getting it across" in their preaching. Negatively, this has an impact on their preaching in crucial ways.

Because their exegetical skills are finely honed, and because of the value placed on the truth, students tend to spend most of their preparation time exegeting the passage and writing the sermon, rather than on reflection and application. The resulting sermons sound like a verbal commentary. Anecdotally, people from the churches where our students minister report a lack of connection between the students' preaching and real life.

In response, we have begun trying to emphasize application in the proclamation workshops. But the effect has not always been positive. As one colleague

described these groups recently, "It's like they got the exegesis spot on, then closed their eyes, fired an arrow randomly into the air, opened their eyes to see where it landed and said, 'That looks like a good place to do application!'" While the students can see the need for relevant and faithful application, apart from a few notable exceptions they do not currently possess the skills required to move from the text to application.

What has become increasingly apparent is that while Moore College is providing a framework and methodology for exegesis, it is not necessarily providing a framework and methodology for application. Given that many of our students move to roles involving significant preaching ministries post college, and most of our students will be involved in ministries where biblical application is crucial, the need for training in biblical application is vital.

Rationale

The overwhelming majority of MTC students choose to enroll in the three- and four-year programs because they are prayerfully preparing for Bible-teaching, leadership roles in churches and parachurch organizations. As such, they are called to preach the truth, refute error, and exhort people to live God-honoring lives for the sake of the glory of Christ (Titus 1:5-15; cf. 2:11-14). By God's grace, the shape of their ministry will impact thousands of Christians around the world. Their Bible teaching will be significant in the worldview formation of the believers they pastor and will shape their understanding of what Christian witness and service looks like. As such, it is vital that they are taught to handle the Word of God with precision and care. Biblically, this precision and care is not confined to getting the truth right, but also to applying this truth to the lives and beliefs of God's people (1 Tim 4:15-16; Titus 2:15; Jas 1:22-25).

Currently, much of the Moore College course concentrates on skills of exegesis and theology. The program emphasizes getting God's truth right from the Bible. While there are many strengths to this, the downside is that our student's sermons are

often perceived as dry, or in reaction to this, the student majors on application without sufficient connection to the exegesis of the passage in question. Neither option is helpful or fruitful. If churchgoers hear those who have been to theological college preaching sermons that do not feel grounded or practical, it reinforces an unhealthy distinction between head Christianity and heart Christianity. This can lead either to mysticism, for those who react against the dryness of the preaching, or to a doctrinaire formalism that values truth without its substance. It is important for the growth of the kingdom and for the discipleship of God's people that the College improves its training of preachers in developing application.

Any program designed to remedy this problem must be both theologically rigorous and faithfully practical. According to Haddon Robinson, "more heresy is preached in application than in Bible exegesis."[2] The approach to encouraging students to be practical and thoughtful in their application will need to engage sound hermeneutical methods and deep theological reflection. It will also be necessary to train students to apply the Scriptures to themselves before they apply them to others. The Bible is very clear that it is not just the message that the preacher preaches, but their character that shapes their ministry (1 Tim 3:1-13; 1 Pet 5:1-4).

A final potential benefit from this project involves another weakness that we have identified in recent years. Final year students are required to choose a theological issue with pastoral implications. They investigate the issue, present their findings to their classmates, and then write a final paper. The faculty have noticed that many students struggle to integrate their learning across various disciplines (e.g., New Testament, Old Testament, Theology, Church History, Ministry & Mission) to engage with practical pastoral problems. Preaching with faithful application that is pastorally aware requires the

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[2] Haddon Robinson, "The Heresy of Application," Preaching Today, accessed September 22, 2020, https://www.preachingtoday.com/books/art-and-craft-of-biblical-preaching/interpretation-and-application/heresy-of-application.html.

integration of learning across the different disciplines that students are engaged in. Thus, a training program designed to develop application in preaching provides the opportunity to integrate skills being learned in different disciplines. Healthy engagement with biblical application and the development of skills for preachers in moving from biblical truth to faithful application will be one way of improving our students' ability to integrate their learning by focusing the outcome of exegetical and theological labor on the pastoral needs of God's people.

For the sake of our students' development, but also for the sake of the churches and ministries that they will pastor in the future, it is vital to devise and implement a theologically rigorous, pastorally aware program to equip students to preach in such a way that they call those who hear them to faith in Jesus and lives lived for his glory.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip students from MTC with the understanding and skills required to develop biblically faithful, relevant application in their preaching.

Goals

To achieve this aim, the following goals were met.

1. The first goal was to recruit a minimum of 10 or more final-year students at Moore College to participate in a training program.

2. The second goal was to develop the curriculum for an 8-week training program in biblically faithful, relevant application.

3. The third goal was to equip the students at MTC to develop biblically faithful, relevant application.

A specific research methodology was created to measure the successful completion of these three goals.[3] The following section describes the methodology.

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[3] All research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the

Research Methodology

Successful completion of this project depended upon the completion of these three goals. The first goal was to recruit a minimum of 10 final-year students at Moore College to participate in a training program. This goal was measured by the submission of a participation agreement.[4] This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 10 final year students submitted a participation agreement indicating their commitment to participating in the training program.

The second goal was to develop the curriculum for an 8-week training program in biblically faithful, relevant application. The curriculum covered the necessity of application in preaching, the role of the preacher in developing application, theological foundations for faithful application, awareness of different attitudes and needs of those listening, how to apply the Bible to behavior, beliefs, and affections, and encouragement to develop habits to help the preacher think faithfully about application. This goal was measured by an expert panel who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.[5] This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to equip the students to develop biblically faithful, relevant application. This goal was measured by administering pre and post surveys. The second survey gathered qualitative as well as quantitative data to measure the change in key skills involved in developing application and in the time spent developing application as part of the sermon preparation process.[6] This goal was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference

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ministry project.

[4] See appendix 1.

[5] See appendix 2.

[6] See appendix 3.

in the pre and post survey scores.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms will be used in the ministry project:

Application. Application is the process or practice of bringing the unchanging truths, principles, and doctrines of God's Word to bear upon people's behaviors, beliefs, and affections with the goal of seeing them transformed into Christ's likeness.[7]

Preaching. Preaching usually refers to the delivery of "a sermon or religious address."[8] It can take many forms. For the purposes of this project, preaching refers primarily to the delivery of an expository sermon, designed to elucidate the meaning and significance of a particular portion of Christian Scripture.

One limitation will apply to this project. Although the aim is to equip all students at MTC to develop biblically faithful, relevant application, the Principal of the College has requested that the project be run as a pilot with volunteers from the student body. To mitigate this limitation students will be recruited from the final year program as these students have a more flexible timetable and are more likely to volunteer.

One delimitation will apply to this project. The training course will be limited to eight sessions. The purpose of this delimitation is to enable the course to fit in with the semester timetable for the students involved.

Conclusion

MTC seeks to train future pastors and ministry leaders, the majority of whom

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[7] The definition is adapted from Joel R. Beeke and David P. Murray, "Practical Application in Preaching," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 4, no. 1 (January 2012): 234-5. Their original statement is, "applicatory preaching takes place when the unchanging truths, principles, and doctrines of God's Word are brought to bear upon people's consciences and every part of their lives to increasingly transform them into Christ's likeness."

[8] Oxford English Dictionary. "Preach, v.," OED Online, December 2020, Oxford University Press, accessed January 5, 2021, https://www.oed-com.ezproxy.sbts.edu/view/Entry/149457?result=3&rskey=hkoLxD&.

will exercise leadership through preaching. Thus, it is vital that the students be equipped to develop biblically faithful, relevant application for the sake of the congregations they lead and God's glory.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE NECESSITY OF
FAITHFUL, RELEVANT APPLICATION
IN SERMONS

In the modern history of homiletics, application has oft been regarded as the
sine qua non of preaching. According to Broadus, "application in a sermon is not merely
an appendage to the discussion or a subordinate part of it, but is the main thing to be
done."[1] He goes on to quote Spurgeon, "Where the application begins, there the sermon
begins." Haddon Robinson and Bryan Chapell both include application as an
indispensable element of their definitions of expository preaching.[2] Edmund Clowney
suggests that application "is an essential part of the preaching of the Word."[3]

Yet, for all this insistence on the necessity of application in preaching, other
voices raise concerns. The Redemption-Historical (RH) school of preaching that traces its
roots back to the biblical theology of Geerhardus Vos via the preaching debate that split
the Dutch Reformed Church in the 1930s expresses significant reservations about
application.[4] Gary Findley's article "Bridges or Ladders" summarizes their concerns.[5]
According to Findley, application in most of its modern guises concerns not just

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[1] John Albert Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4th ed (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), 165.

[2] See Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids:Baker, 1980), 20; Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 129.

[3] Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002), 80.

[4] For an in-depth examination of the debate see Sidney Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001).

[5] Gary F. Findley, "Bridges or Ladders?," *Kerux* 17, no. 2 (September 2002), https://www.kerux.com/doc/1702A1.asp.

application but hermeneutics because a preoccupation with relevance drives homileticians towards a bridge-building model of application. This bridge-building concerns Findley because it emphasizes the cultural gap between the biblical times and our own times as the primary problem to be overcome by the preacher. He names John Stott, Timothy Warren, Daniel Doriani, Sidney Griedanus, and John Frame as proponents of this kind of hermeneutical method, which, by emphasizing the preacher's responsibility to overcome the historical-cultural gap in the move from the biblical text to present-day application, results in the modern context controlling biblical interpretation. As such, he suggests that this method is largely synonymous with Bultmann's demythologizing of the New Testament.

In response, Findley argues for what he terms "legitimate sermonic application."[6] This involves recognizing the immediate relevance of the Bible and working to bring the hearer to the Bible rather than bringing the Bible to the hearer. While Findley's intentions are honorable, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the only legitimate application of Scripture is the call to belong to Christ rather than Adam.

> Legitimate sermonic application must cause people to identify with biblical history (must join them to it) and must connect them with God's visitations to earth throughout its history. Such application preserves the integrity of Scripture, so that each and every passage carries us to Christ, the ladder on which we are carried heavenward to God. Application of the text involves bringing the listeners into the text, to experience its history, to see themselves there, to see that neither their spiritual situation, nor their need for Christ is any different from the saints of old . . . The situation of everyone remains remarkably the same. Either you are in Adam, or you are in Christ.[7]

To put this another way, every part of the Bible is about Jesus and the appropriate "application" is to help the hearer see the problem of their sinfulness and their need for Christ. "Thus, legitimate application of the Scripture causes us to feel the guilt that Adam felt, to see ourselves as Adam saw himself standing outside of Christ. Legitimate

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[6] Findley, "Bridges or Ladders?"

[7] Findley, "Bridges or Ladders?"

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application also causes us to see ourselves in Christ, as Christ saw himself—a Son bent on pleasing his heavenly Father."[8]

While the gospel primacy of this approach is commendable, it is also open to reductionism. An emphasis on Christ very quickly turns into an emphasis on the atonement as the grid through which all preaching must be passed. Peter Jensen comments, "A pattern has developed by some schooled in biblical theology in which the cross has become everything. No sermon seems complete without the assurance of sins forgiven, through the death of the Savior. Often the reference requires considerable ingenuity and is done at the expense of the passage under consideration. The aim is to avoid moralism."[9]

The emphasis on preaching Christ and making the gospel clear has led many Sydney Evangelicals to an uncomfortable relationship with application. For present purposes, Peter Greenwood's article "The Dilemma of Preaching and Hearing God's Word" represents some of the key concerns.[10] Greenwood begins by recounting a particular event in his own ministry. Finding himself pushed for preparation time one week, he does less exegetical work than usual and preaches a sermon heavy on application. The response? "People loved it."[11] Upon reflection, Greenwood found that "something wasn't sitting comfortably with [his] soul."[12] He explains his dilemma as

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[8] Findley, "Bridges or Ladders?"

[9] Peter F. Jensen, "Now Is the Time to Preach: Preaching in Eschatological Context," in Chase R. Kuhn and Paul Grimmond, eds., *Theology Is for Preaching: Biblical Foundations, Method, and Practice*, Studies in Historical and Systematic Theology (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 225-226.

[10] Peter Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching and Hearing God's Word," *The Briefing* (blog), July 8, 2012, http://thebriefing.com.au/2012/07/the-dilemma-of-preaching/. For some context, *The Briefing* was a monthly periodical engaging with ministry issues from a theological perspective published by Matthias Media from 1988-2015 and was widely regarded by Sydney Evangelicals as their publication. All articles from *The Briefing* are now available online. In the interests of full disclosure, I worked as the Senior Editor of *The Briefing* from September 2009 to December 2010.

[11] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

[12] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

follows.

> On the one hand, my biblical instincts drive me to do the hard yards of "correctly handling the Word of God" (2 Tim 4:15)—working hard on the text to deepen my own understanding and communicate that understanding. On the other hand, stories, illustrations, and application grounded in "real life" seem to have the best return for my preaching investment. So much so, that there seems to be a gaping chasm between "understanding" the text (large effort, little return) and "applying" that same text (little effort, large return).[13]

What emerges in the rest of the article is a complex argument about the place and nature of application. On the one hand, Greenwood contends that there should be no gap between understanding and applying a text because "[u]nderstanding Scripture, by its very nature, is, and always will be, applicable."[14] But the problem lies in the relative effort required to preach good exegesis as opposed to application. Making exegesis interesting is hard work, making application interesting is easy. So, he suggests, many end up as "'razzle-dazzle' preachers" who "keep the audience in rapt attention with their slick storytelling, charisma, rhetorical sophistication, and every other trick in the preacher's playbook"[15] rather than working hard on the biblical text. In many ways, Greenwood's concern mirrors that of Findley. The value that the preacher and hearer places on application results in the modern context controlling the sermon rather than the text of Scripture.

However, Greenwood goes on to suggest that an emphasis on application creates another significant problem. It tends to place the preacher in the place of God. Firstly, he states,

> The preacher's responsibility is to be faithful to the text; transforming human hearts to see the Word of God as it actually is (2 Thess 1) is God's prerogative. Not only so, but the preacher must themselves have an inherent trust that God will work, by his Spirit, through the Word of God, to change lives. For without this trust in God,

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[13] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

[14] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

[15] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

the preacher is susceptible to all sorts of error.[16]

He returns to this issue later in the article when he states, "the preacher prayerfully prepares and delivers God's Word to the audience, understanding the demarcation between their part (to set forth the truth plainly) and God's (to work through his powerful Word to convict people of their sin and the grace found in Jesus Christ)."[17] For Greenwood, the move towards application on the part of the preacher entails the sinful appropriation of a responsibility that rightly belongs to God. He states boldly, "When it comes to the preaching of God's Word, the shift from boring exegesis to interesting application typifies a shift from trusting in the Word of God, to 'enhancing' it via our own sinful inventions."[18] As much as exegesis and application go together, Greenwood is fearful that in the hands of the sinful preacher, application will trump exegesis every time and leave the preacher in the place of God.

In sum, application presents a catalog of potential difficulties for the reformed evangelical preacher. To persuade students who share many of the theological and biblical convictions of Findley and Greenwood of the value and significance of developing biblical faithful, relevant application it will be necessary to show how a biblical understanding of application maintains a gospel focused, biblical-theological hermeneutic. The aim of the rest of this chapter will be to show that application is an essential goal of God's work in the gospel and that this work is the responsibility of the preacher as well as the work of God's Spirit and God's Word.

What Is Application?

Key to pursing this goal is the meaning of "application." The *Definitions and Limitations* section of this paper defines application as follows, "Application is the

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[16] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

[17] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

[18] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

process or practice of bringing the unchanging truths, principles, and doctrines of God's Word to bear upon people's beliefs, affections, motivations, and actions with the goal of seeing them transformed into Christ's likeness." It is typical of definitions of application given in books on expository preaching. The essence of application, for the preacher, is to bring the Word to bear on the hearer. The problem comes in trying to define what this means, for in practice application is used to cover a wide range of meaning. For the purposes of this paper, there are at least two distinct elements. First, there are what might be called "clear" or "obvious" applications. These are the beliefs and behaviors that follow from the direct commands of Scripture. For example, the command to love your neighbor may result in several different actions that someone could perform towards their neighbor in response to the command. The first use of application refers to the preaching of these belief and behavior implications (hereafter A1).

But thoughtful reflection on this use of application gives rise to a more complex meaning of application, for not every Scriptural imperative should be applied to every modern reader of the text. This is seen most obviously in the Old Testament commandments which are abrogated by the work of Christ. For example, the Bible explicitly tells Old Testament worshipers to respond to their sins by bringing a lamb for sacrifice (Lev 5:6), but Christians no longer stand under this exhortation because of the work of Jesus (Heb 10:1-14). However, this is not just an issue involved in moving from the Old Testament to the New. For instance, some of Jesus commands to his disciples seem to apply to present-day believers while others do not.

When Jesus sends out the seventy-two on a mission to Israel he says to them, "Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road" (Luke 10:4), he does not seem to be issuing commands that should affect the packing list for modern missionaries. Despite the possibly trivial nature of this example, the point is important. Applications in the Bible made to particular groups of people at particular times in particular places are sometimes translated to other groups of believers at other

places and times in complex ways. In talking about application, we use the word not just to mean that there are belief and behavior implications given in particular passages, but that belief and behavior applications are translated from one situation to another. This is particularly important in dealing with complex ethical issues where there is no direct commandment of Scripture. How should a Christian respond to issues like dating, euthanasia, stem-cell research, or how to use an iPhone appropriately? If there are genuinely biblical responses to these questions, they involve applying truths revealed in Scripture to circumstances not spoken about in the Bible. At this point, application means something more than living out the commandments of the Bible. It means working out how and when those commandments apply, and how words spoken to one group of people at one time in one location, now have significance to another group of people in another location at another time in history (hereafter A2).

In light of A1 and A2 understandings of application, if we want to answer the questions raised for the evangelical preacher about application, it becomes necessary to show that both A1 and A2 are biblically appropriate moves and that they are moves required of the preacher rather than just being the prerogative of the Spirit.

Application (A1) Is a Biblical Requirement

Many biblical passages could be referred to in order to establish the importance of belief and behavior applications for Christian ministry. Of all those passages, Titus 2 has the distinct advantage of linking the gospel priority of godliness with the necessity of the preacher's role in application.

The closing verses of Titus 2 (vv. 11-14) express the deep theological connection between the work of Christ and the importance of godliness. The section opens with the declaration that "the grace (χάρις) of God has appeared" (Titus 2:11). The use of both "grace" and "appeared" lead most commentators to speak of Christ's life, death, and resurrection as the referent here. William Mounce says, "'grace' is a one-word

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summary of God's saving act in Christ, given freely to sinners who believe."[19] The

significance of the appearance of God's kindness in Christ's work is that it offers

salvation to all,[20] and trains his people.

These two elements are both significant. First, the passage teaches not just that

salvation is on offer, but that it is available to all people. This is not a reference to

universalism, but rather an indication that salvation is available to all kinds of people. In

the context, this most likely refers to the range of people that Paul has encouraged Titus

to address in 2:1-10—old and young, men and women, free and slave.[21] The appearing of

God's grace in Christ has made salvation available to all classes and conditions of

people—Paul is effectively saying, "this applies to you, no matter who you are." In

speaking of salvation, the passage places us firmly in the realm of God's work for us.

However, Paul moves quickly from justification to sanctification. The grace

which brings the possibility of salvation also trains (παιδεύουσα) those who are saved.

This training has both a positive and negative aspect. The positive is expressed by the

principal verb (ζήσωμεν, "to live") whereas the negative is expressed by the participle

(ἀρνησάμενοι, "renouncing"). The effect is to emphasize the positive training, while

acknowledging that the grace of God trains both negatively and positively.

Negatively, grace trains its recipient to renounce or deny ungodliness

(ἀσέβειαν) and worldly desires (κοσμικὰς ἐπιθυμίας). Ungodliness involves both beliefs

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[19] William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary 46 (Nashville: Nelson, 2009), 422.

[20] σωτήριος in the nominative suggests that it could modify χάρις indicating: "the saving grace of God has appeared to all people," but most commentators take it as a predicate nominative functioning adverbially, resulting in the sense: "God's grace has appeared and in so doing has made deliverance available for all people." See Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 422; cf. I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 268.

[21] See Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, ; cf. George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 319.

and practices[22] and worldly desires involve desires, longings, or cravings.[23] The two expressions together reference the whole person in rebellion against God. Paul is adamant that the acceptance of salvation offered by grace entails the responsibility to renounce every element of the old life of rebellion against God. As Mounce sagely notes, "The verse deals a blow to any theology that separates salvation from the demands of obedience to the Lordship of Christ."[24]

But Paul is not only concerned with the negative training brought about by grace. Grace trains people positively to live in three crucial ways, expressed by the three adverbs "in a self-controlled manner" (σωφρόνως), "justly" (δικαίως), and "reverently" (εὐσεβῶς).[25] The implication is that the whole of life for the one who knows salvation is shaped by self-control, by the lifestyle that is in keeping with their justification, and by a godly reverence in all things. In the strongest possible terms, Paul teaches the saved person to live their entire lives with godliness in view. Sanctification is an essential outworking of justification.

But Paul is not finished at this point, he has two other crucial points to make. The first involves the time in which the recipient of salvation lives, and the second, the way in which grace trains for godliness. The use of the cognates Ἐπεφάνη (appeared, v. 11) and ἐπιφάνειαν (appearing, v. 13) place the believer at a very particular point in biblical history. The one who receives the salvation offered by grace lives out their life in "the present age" (ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι), the time between the first appearance of Christ and

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[22] "53.10 ἀσεβέω; ἀσέβεια," in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains,* 2nd ed., edited by Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989).

[23] "ἐπιθυμία.," in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed., edited by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958).

[24] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 423.

[25] For these three words, see Mounce's translation of the passage in Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 420.

his second. If the first appearing revealed God's grace, then the second will make God's glory (δόξης) known to all. In particular, the glory of God as revealed in Jesus Christ who is both our God and Savior.[26] Training in godliness in the present age is done in anticipation of sharing in God's glory revealed in Christ in the age to come. This connection between godliness and glory represents a significant New Testament theme. Both Jesus and Peter encourage believers to live for godliness with the hope of glorifying God (Matt 5:16; cf. 1 Pet 2:12), and in 2 Corinthians, Paul speaks of the transformation of Christians as growing in glory in the likeness of our Lord (2 Cor 3:18).

Christians, then, are to live in the time between Christ's first and second coming, being trained by grace and anticipating glory, both of which involve an essential commitment to godliness. But one question remains outstanding. How does the grace of God train Christians to renounce ungodliness and to pursue lives of godliness as they wait for the hope of glory? Paul answers this question in verse 14 as he unpacks further the work of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

The most significant contribution of verse 14 to Paul's unfolding argument is that it clearly specifies the purpose of Christ's death. The use of a ἵνα clause indicates the purpose for which Christ died. Christ gave himself for two goals (expressed by the two subjunctive verbs)—to redeem us (λυτρώσηται) from all lawlessness, and to purify (καθαρίσῃ) for himself a special people who are zealous for good works. The clauses parallel the negative and positive training of grace in verse 12 but bring greater clarity to the nature of Christ's work. The appearing of grace ought to train saved people positively and negatively precisely because the purpose of Christ's self-giving is their redemption and purification.

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[26] The phrase τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ could relate to either God the Father and Jesus Christ or could be a reference to Jesus Christ as God. Mounce, Knight, Marshall, and Fee all opt for the second option. See Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 426-31; Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 274-82; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 322-26; Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, New International Biblical Commentary 13 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 195-96.

Paul explains the purpose of Christ's death in terms of a redemption from all lawlessness. The redemption language implies that prior to salvation, people live in slavery to a way of life characterized by lawlessness. Christ's death is the purchase price to free them from this slavery. But they are not just freed from slavery, they are purified to belong to Jesus, and the essence of this belonging is to be exhibited in their zeal for good works. Again, Paul taps into a rich vein of New Testament teaching. The idea of the Christian life being for the sake of good works is a regular feature of biblical exhortation (Matt 5:16; Eph 2:10; Col 1:10; 1 Tim 5:10; 6:18, 2 Tim 2:21; 3:17; Heb 10:24). Despite the danger of works righteousness that Paul combats multiple times in his writings, good works are always positive in the New Testament.

In summary, Titus 2:11-14 teaches that Christians live between the first and second comings of Christ, in light of the revelation of grace in the past and the hope of glory in the future. As Christians live in this present age, they are to understand themselves as redeemed from a godless way of life and purified for the sake of living for godliness because this was the very purpose of Christ's self-giving.

Application (A1) Is the Responsibility of the Preacher

What then is the preacher to do with these truths? Paul is adamant that the preacher must teach not only what Christ has done for us, but also about the nature of the Christian life that Christ's death and resurrection calls us to. In Titus 2:15, Paul turns to Titus considering what he has just explained and encourages him to "Speak these things (Ταῦτα)." In normal usage, Ταῦτα could refer either forwards or backwards in the text, but most commentators see a reference back to the things of chapter 2.[27] This fits well

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[27] Mounce sees a reference to the entire epistle (Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 432), Marshall thinks it refers generally to the preceding instructions (Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 297), Fee and Knight both think that the most likely referent is 2:2-14 (Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 197; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 329), and Towner prefers 2:1-14 (Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2006], 766). In any case, Paul's encouragement to "speak these things" is seen as entailing the content of the rest of chapter 2 by all these commentators.

with Paul's encouragement in 2:1 to "teach what accords with sound doctrine." In essence, the entire chapter has been about what Titus should teach God's people. Remarkably, most of the chapter is not about the nature of the gospel, but about the pattern of life to be lived.

Paul encourages Titus to address older men (2:2), older women (2:3-4), younger women (2:4-5), younger men (2:6), and slaves (2:9-10), and to be an example to all (2:7-8). In each case, as he commends "what accords with sound doctrine," it is the character and pattern of the Christian life that he is to share. Issues such as child raising, self-control, sobriety, love, and faithfulness are to be key elements of Titus's content as he teaches the faith to God's people. This concern for the character and pattern of the Christian life as an essential element of Christian teaching is not found here alone in the New Testament.

In an intriguing passage (Eph 4:20-24), Paul speaks about how the Ephesian believers learned Christ. He uses both the language of learning (ἐμάθετε) and teaching (ἐδιδάχθητε) in this section. Because of its importance for the present discussion, it is worth quoting in full.

> But that is not the way you *learned* Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were *taught* in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:20-24)

As Paul spoke to the Ephesians about how they were taught about Jesus, his teaching did not simply involve information about Christ's life, death, and resurrection, but the whole shape of the Christian life. The Ephesians learned Christ by grasping the implications of his death, resurrection, and lordship for their lives. In the ensuing verses, Paul goes on to deal with issues such as speaking the truth (Eph 4:25), dealing well with anger (Eph 4:26-27), thieves performing honest work (Eph 4:28), speaking what builds up rather than corrupts (Eph 4:29), and replacing bitterness, anger, and wrath with kindness and

forgiveness (Eph 4:31-32). Paul's pattern in teaching Christ was to share the truth about Jesus and to encourage and exhort the hearers to understand the shape, character, and importance of the new life that they were called to in Christ.

Paul exhorts Timothy to a similar pattern in 1 Timothy 4:11-16. As he encourages Timothy to "command and teach these things," Paul once again holds together a combination of gospel truth and a gospel way of life. Timothy is to be an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity as he teaches the Scriptures because it is by keeping a watch *on himself* and *the teaching* that he will save himself and others.

The pattern of teaching that Paul encourages Titus to is the same pattern that he himself employed and that he also urged on Timothy. Faithful pastoring involves speaking the truths about Christ and teaching people the pattern of the Christian life. Or to put this in other language, the preacher is to preach the indicative and the imperative. We can only conclude that A1 application at least, is an essential part of the minister's responsibility.

Application (A2) Is a Biblical Requirement

But what can be said about A2 application? Does the Bible give license to the preacher to move beyond the initial context of biblical commands and statements to apply them in new contexts?

The famous passage about the nature of Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 supplies some crucial hints towards the answer to this question. In this passage, the apostle Paul speaks to his protégé, Timothy, encouraging him to be faithful in his ministry as he struggles with all the difficulties of living in the last days (2 Tim 3:1-13). In this context, Paul encourages Timothy to continue in what he has learned from the "sacred writings" (ἱερὰ γράμματα, 2 Tim 3:15) and "Scripture" (γραφὴ, 2 Tim 3:16). Although the term "sacred writings" is unique in the Bible, it was a phrase widely used by Greek-speaking Jews to refer to the Jewish Scriptures and there is no reason to assume that Paul

is using it differently here.[28] The referent of "All Scripture" (2 Tim 3:16) is a little more difficult to determine. There is considerable discussion amongst commentators as to the precise meaning, particularly with regards to whether it refers only to the Old Testament or more generally to the Old Testament plus other authoritative texts.[29] Whatever position is taken on other texts, there is little dissent about the fact that at least the Old Testament is in view.

This observation is important when it comes to thinking about A2 application because whatever else might be implied, what Paul says in these verses certainly applies to the Old Testament. Further, everything that Paul says about the Old Testament in this section is related to its current relevance for Timothy. Built into Paul's argument is the understanding that words written to other people, at another time and in another place, are applicable to Timothy in his circumstances, both as a believer and a teacher, and that these words are not just applicable to Timothy but are the words he is to teach to others. To appreciate the significance of this, we need to investigate several key things that Paul asserts about the Old Testament in this context.

First, the Old Testament is able to make Timothy wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 3:15). Paul states unequivocally that the Old Testament points beyond itself and the face value meaning of its words to the person and work of Christ. This involves more than just explicit promises about the coming of the Messiah (e.g., Ezek 24:23-24; Isa 9:6), but also words that had a concrete historical referent when they were originally given and yet subsequently interpreted as being about Jesus following his

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[28] Luke Timothy Johnson. *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed, The Anchor Bible 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 419; cf. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 443.

[29] Mounce sees a reference to "the OT and the gospel message (for the latter, its oral proclamation and perhaps parts that were written and disseminated by this time are to be included)." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 568. Johnson thinks Paul means, "whatever collection of compositions he and the earliest churches used and regarded as authoritative." Johnson, *Timothy*, 423. Towner limits the reference to the OT, but in the sense of every text in the OT rather than a simple reference to the OT as a whole. Towner, *The Letters*, 586-587.

coming. For example, Hosea says, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos 11:1). These words were clearly intended by Hosea to refer to the Exodus events and God's rescue of Israel from slavery in Egypt but are applied by the apostles to the circumstances of Jesus's life (Matt 2:15). Paul believes that the Old Testament, which Timothy has been acquainted with since his childhood, is able to lead a person to faith in Jesus Christ. The Old Testament words point to a reality beyond themselves and function in another time and place to bring about God's purposes of faith in the life of the believer.

Second, all Scripture is God-breathed and useful. Paul makes several critical points here. The first is found in his use of "all" (πᾶσα). The word can mean either "all," referring to the whole, or "every," referring to every portion of Scripture. As I. Howard Marshall points out, "To say 'All of the Scripture' is in effect to say 'every passage of Scripture', and therefore in the end of the day a decision is not important."[30] In other words, whatever decision is made on this score, there is no question that Paul is making claims about the entirety of the Old Testament. He claims that it is both "breathed out by God" (θεόπνευστος) and "useful" (ὠφέλιμος). The God-breathed character of the Old Testament is a significant statement about the nature of Scripture that deserves further attention, but we pass over it quickly because it is less germane to the present argument.

More significant is the statement Paul makes about the usefulness of the Old Testament. By speaking about the whole Old Testament, Paul refers not only to the commandments, but the histories, narratives, poetry, and proverbs of the Old Testament when he speaks of the usefulness of Scripture. Paul is not necessarily making the claim that every individual passage in the Old Testament does all four of the things mentioned later in the verse,[31] but rather that the Old Testament as a whole performs these actions.

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[30] Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 792.

[31] See Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 445 cf. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 792.

Most importantly, Paul is not restricting the four ways in which the Old Testament is useful to particular portions of Scripture. The Old Testament in all its variety is useful in all of these ways.

Third, the Old Testament is useful for both doctrine and practice. It both declares truth and brings about change in the hearer. Several scholars suggest that the four nouns describing the usefulness of Scripture are clustered in two pairs. The first two—"teaching" (διδασκαλίαν) and "reproof" (ἐλεγμόν)—refer to doctrine or belief and the second two—"correction" (ἐπανόρθωσιν) and "training" (παιδείαν)—to behavior.[32] When Paul speaks about the usefulness of the Scripture, he has in mind not just that it conveys correct information, but that it challenges the hearer in both belief and action. It shows us where we are going wrong and how to turn back to the right path both in relation to truth and in relation to the activities of everyday life. The hearer of Scripture should expect to be challenged and rebuked, not merely informed. The Old Testament will transform the hearer by God's grace.

Fourth, Scripture is also a sufficient Word. By the use of ἐξηρτισμένος ("to make someone completely adequate or sufficient for something"[33]), coupled with πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ("every good work"), Paul insists that there is no good work required that lies outside of the equipping action of God's Word. If the believer is created in Christ for the good works prepared by the Father (Eph 2:10), then every one of these works are made possible by the action of Scripture in the believer's life.

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[32] Knight (Knight, *The Pastoral* Epistles, 449-450), Mounce (Mounce, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 570), and Fee (Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 279-280) all suggest this doctrinal/ethical pairing, but Marshall (Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 795) notes that "reproof" (ἐλεγμόν) can relate to behavior just as readily as to doctrine and so suggests that the pairing is too neat. The doctrinal/behavioral distinction related to these two pairs of words goes back at least as far as William Perkins who used it to build his case for two kinds of application in preaching (see William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying. With The Calling of the Ministry*, Rev. ed., Puritan Paperbacks [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996], 64-68). Whether the words exist in two neat pairs delineating belief and behavioral applications, all agree that doctrine and practise are both in view.

[33] "75.5 ἐξαρτίζω; καταρτίζω; κατάρτισις, εως; καταρτισμός, οῦ", Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*.

In the immediate context, this word about the sufficiency of Scripture comes to Timothy as "the man of God" (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος). Given the Old Testament usage of the term with respect to Moses and the prophets, and Paul's prior usage of the term (1 Tim 6:11), it seems likely that the primary reference here is to Timothy in his role as a leader amongst God's people.[34] While it would be possible to suggest that this limits the sufficiency of Scripture to its work in the life of leaders, this would be a significant misreading. The Bible regularly exhorts believers to follow their leader's example of life (Phil 3:17; Heb 13:7) and reminds us that, if anything, leaders are held to a higher standard of judgement (Jas 3:1). If the Scriptures are sufficient to equip the man of God for every good work in his ministry of God's Word, then they must also equip believers for every good work.

The Bible Trains Us How to Move from the Original Context to the Modern Hearer

We have seen the New Testament explicitly teaching that the whole Old Testament—a word written to a particular people (Israel) at particular times and in particular places—transcends its original context. The Old Testament is a word that equips present day believers by shaping their beliefs and behaviours to lead them to salvation in Jesus and equip them for the task of doing the good works that God has prepared for his people to do.

Importantly, how this happens is not left up to the preacher's ingenuity. The Bible furnishes a wide variety of examples of the way in which Jesus and the apostles use the Old Testament for these very purposes. Three brief examples will suffice to make the point.

First, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shows that specific Old Testament

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[34] Towner, *The Letters*, 593; Johnson, *Timothy*, 421; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570-571.

commands have significance beyond the meaning of the words in their original context.

For example, the command "do not kill" has implications for anger and hatred (Exod

20:13; cf. Matt 5:21-26), or the commandment against adultery should be applied also to

the lusts of peoples' hearts (Exod 20:14; cf. Matt 5:27-30). He speaks these words

primarily to his disciples (Matt 5:1) as an encouragement to live faithfully as his

followers, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds

of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in

heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matt 5:11-12). A

point that he further emphasizes by encouraging them to bring glory to *their heavenly

Father* (Matt 5:16), language that is reserved in the New Testament for believers.

In this context, Jesus explains that it is impossible to belong to the kingdom

"unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees" (Matt 5:20). While

this phrase is often taken to imply the necessity of Christ's righteousness, wrought

through his work on the cross, for salvation, that does not seem to be how Jesus uses it

here.[35] Jesus speaks to his disciples about what kingdom righteousness looks like in terms

of anger, lust, divorce, oaths, and love for your enemies (Matt 5:21-48). In each case,

Jesus's point is that kingdom righteousness expects a way of living that far exceeds the

letter of the law. The implication is that people who belong to Jesus will not seek to limit

the law by narrowing its application like the Pharisees but will be pleased to see all the

riches and depth of the ethical call of Christ in the commandments applied to their fullest.

Theologically, this kind of righteousness is impossible for God's people apart from the

work of Christ applied through the Spirit. But crucially for the present argument, Jesus

issues an invitation to reread the Old Testament in light of his coming.

The rest of the New Testament furnishes numerous accounts of the apostles

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[35] The point is not to deny the theological necessity of Christ's imputed righteousness for salvation, but rather to show that this is not what Jesus speaks about in the Sermon on the Mount.

following Jesus's example. An intriguing instance of applying the Old Testament words in ways that lie within the spirit of the law but beyond the letter occurs in Paul's argument about the right of gospel workers to be paid for their labor (1 Cor 9:1-12 esp. vv. 8-10). In these verses Paul claims that he has the right to earn his living from gospel work on the basis of an Old Testament law about not muzzling oxen (1 Cor 9:9; cf. Deut 25:4). He explicitly claims the authority of the law for his position (1 Cor 9:8) by taking an Old Testament command about the right treatment of oxen and applying it to Bible teachers. It is not a stretch to suggest that when the Westminster divines stated that "[t]he whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, *or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture*," they were reflecting on the way that the Bible deals with itself, and following Paul's (not to mention Jesus's) example. The original words of the Old Testament are to be understood in their broader theological and biblical context and are intended to be applied in new contexts.

A final example occurs in the book of Hebrews. According to the author, the words of Psalm 95 (written centuries before) were being spoken by the Holy Spirit to his present-day hearers (Heb 3:7) as a warning to respond to the salvation offered in Jesus. Incredibly, Psalm 95 itself was the application of a prior moment in history to Israel's situation in the time of the Psalmist. In calling Israel to come and worship God (Psalm 95:6), the Psalmist refers to the events of the Exodus when Israel rebelled against Moses at Meribah and Massah (Exod 17:7). The Psalmist calls his contemporaries to worship God by reminding them that "today" is the day to listen to God and not rebel as Israel had previously done. The Holy Spirit then speaks the words of Psalm 95, through the writer of the Hebrews, and applies them to his audience sometime in the latter part of the 1st century AD, suggesting that "today" is still the day. In many ways, this is a concrete application of the principle laid out in Corinthians: "Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did" (1 Cor 10:6).

Thus, both in explicit statements about the nature and purpose of the Old Testament (e.g., 1 Cor 10:6), and in the way they handle the Old Testament, the Spirit inspired apostles of God repeatedly spoke the words of the Old Testament originally directed by a particular author to a particular group of people at a particular time into a new situation on the assumption that the original words had significance in their present situation, even a significance beyond the understanding of the original recipients of the words.

We have seen then that Jesus and the apostles expected, modelled, and encouraged believers to understand the Old Testament words of God in light of the life and teaching of Jesus, and to live wholeheartedly in light of the fullness of those words in their present situation as followers of Jesus. As Jesus and the apostles handled the Old Testament they modelled and encouraged A2 application as a normal and appropriate way of handling the Scriptures.

Application (A2) Is the Responsibility of the Preacher

We have already laid the foundations for showing that A2 application is both a necessary element of biblical application and that this is a responsibility of the preacher. But there is further significant evidence in second Timothy that strengthens the case. As has already been seen, Paul uses four key words to describe the usefulness of Scripture— "teaching" (διδασκαλίαν), "reproof" (ἐλεγμόν), "correction" (ἐπανόρθωσιν), and "training in righteousness" (παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ) (2 Tim 3:16-17). Having described the Spirit-inspired providence and usefulness of Scripture, Paul turns at the beginning of chapter four to describe the responsibilities of the minister of God's truth.

Paul begins by explaining the context of the charge that he is about to deliver to Timothy. That he speaks "in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus" marks out the seriousness of the coming command. He then heightens the significance of his charge by highlighting Christ's role as the "judge" (κρίνειν) who will soon "appear" (ἐπιφάνειαν)

bringing his "kingdom" (βασιλείαν). As Philip Towner notes, Paul uses three significant "eschatological realities" as the grounds for "reorient[ing] present life."[36] The effect is to establish the weight and importance of the command he is about to deliver. Marshall describes it as "a remarkably solemn adjuration in which Timothy is made aware of his obligations in the context of the coming judgement."[37]

What kind of command could possibly warrant such an extended and emphatic prelude? Preach the Word (κήρυξον τὸν λόγον)! The Word that Paul has just described as God's inspired Word that completely equips the man of God for every good work is the Word that Timothy is to preach. But notice particularly the activities that Paul associates with the preaching Timothy is to undertake. He is to "reprove" (ἔλεγξον), "rebuke" (ἐπιτίμησον), and "exhort" (παρακάλεσον). Each of these imperatives calls on Timothy to act and speak in particular ways towards people as he preaches the Word. Timothy is not just to speak some truths and wait for the Spirit to act, he is to act in particular ways towards the recipients of his word.

Two further things should be noted about Timothy's ministry here. First, there is significant overlap between the description of the usefulness of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16) and the tasks that Timothy is called on to perform.[38] What Scripture does, Timothy is also to do. Second, the tasks that Timothy is called on to perform sound remarkably like activities that we might associate with application. The task of reproving involves "revealing sin, bringing the hearers to the point of awareness and acknowledgement."[39] Rebuking "consists of a (verbal) challenge, whereby one is openly or publicly charged

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[36] Towner, *The Letters, 599.*

[37] Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 798.

[38] Mounce comments "The four main imperatives ('Preach! Confront! Rebuke! Exhort!') loosely parallel the four prepositional phrases in 3:16." (see Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 573).

[39] Towner, *The Letters*, 601.

with error or sin."[40] Exhortation involves "teaching, encouragement, and exhortation."[41] As Timothy preaches the Word, he is also to bring the implications of that Word to bear in the lives of those to whom he ministers the gospel. There is no gap between what Scripture does and what the preacher does. This should not be taken to imply that the preacher takes on the role of the Holy Spirit. However, it does indicate that the kind of distinction envisioned by Greenwood between the role of the Holy Spirit and the role of the preacher regarding application does not correspond with the biblical picture.

To be fair to Greenwood, there is much to commend about his article. When he critiques the preacher who preaches for the sake of entertainment and who focuses on application at the expense of faithful exegesis, he rightly challenges some dangerous tendencies in both the hearts of preachers and hearers. However, his sometimes careless use of categories undermines his purpose, particularly when it comes to dealing with what he means by application.

On the one hand he suggests that his "starting point is the false dichotomy between understanding the text and applying that text."[42] For Greenwood "[s]etting up understanding and application of a text as polar opposites is fundamentally flawed." On the most generous reading possible, he is arguing for application based on a firm exegetical understanding of the passage. However, when it comes to explaining why the gap between understanding and application should not exist, he goes too far. He states, "[u]nderstanding Scripture, by its very nature, is, and always will be, applicable. That is, the end point of reading Scripture is not to know how to live our lives, but to know God. Therefore any time we read Scripture it will be applicable to us, because it will tell us about God." Even allowing for rhetorical flourish, it seems unhelpful to draw a

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[40] Towner, *The Letters*, 601.

[41] Towner, *The Letters*, 602.

[42] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

distinction between knowing how to live our lives and knowing God, before moving on to suggest that somehow knowing God leads automatically to application.

If the evidence that we have seen in this chapter is taken seriously, biblical preaching involves both leading people to a knowledge of God and explaining the character and shape of godliness to be lived out in obedience to him. Knowing God does not automatically lead to understanding how his lordship applies, even if the heart is willing. Further, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Greenwood's rhetoric gets the better of him when suggests that in "the preaching of God's Word, the shift from boring exegesis to interesting application typifies a shift from trusting in the Word of God, to "enhancing" it via our own sinful inventions."[43] If understanding is application and if an attempt to apply represents a sinful shift away from trusting in God's Word, then it is difficult to read the "demarcation" he insists upon, between the preacher's part in the preaching process to "set forth the truth plainly," and God's part in the process, to "work through his powerful Word to convict people of their sin and the grace found in Jesus Christ"[44] as anything other than an insistence that the preacher perform faithful exegesis through which he prays that God will bring change. Ultimately, Greenwood seems to argue that the move from the meaning of the text to challenging the heart of the hearer is something that the Spirit must do independently of the preacher.

In response, Michael Lawrence's distinction between application and conviction is significant.[45] In a short but helpful article arguing that application is an essential part of preaching, Lawrence notes the propensity of preachers to speak about the Holy Spirit as the one who "appl[ies] the text to a person's heart"[46], by which they mean

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[43] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

[44] Greenwood, "The Dilemma of Preaching."

[45] See Michael Lawrence, "No Application? Then You Haven't Preached," 9Marks, accessed August 17, 2021, https://www.9marks.org/article/no-application-then-you-havent-preached/.

[46] Lawrence, "No Application?"

something like "if I put the truth out there, and then get out of the way, then the Holy Spirit has a clear field to do his work. And he'll do it far better than I could anyway."[47] In response, he argues that the Spirit's job is to bring conviction, but conviction is not the same as application.

> Application is different from conviction. Though its goal is the heart, it's aimed at the understanding. If exegesis requires us to understand the original context of the text, application is all about exploring the contemporary context in which that text is heard. It's about identifying categories of life, ethics, and understanding in which this particular Word of Christ needs to dwell richly.[48]

Lawrence's point is well made and agrees with what have seen elsewhere in this chapter. Both A1 and A2 types of application are modelled and encouraged by Scripture. The preacher's role, far from being to speak the truth and leave the rest to the Holy Spirit, is to teach the Bible in a way that rebukes, corrects, challenges, encourages, and exhorts. Developing faithful application that relates to the meaning of the text in light of its broader biblical and theological context is integral to the preacher's task. The preacher ought to preach these kinds of applications, praying for the Spirit to do what only the Spirit can do—bring conviction. The Spirit's role is not so much to bridge the gap between meaning and contemporary significance but rather to provoke the heart to repentance and faith in light of the truth of God's Word faithfully applied. This is not to suggest that the Spirit never graciously brings applications and challenges to the heart of the hearer that are beyond the intention of the preacher—praise be to God that this happens! But this is not the regular work of the Spirit, and it is certainly not a responsibility forbidden from the preacher.

Conclusion

Considering the potential nervousness of students shaped by their reformed

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[47] Lawrence, "No Application?"

[48] Lawrence, "No Application?"

tradition around issues of application, the aim of this chapter has been to show that there are two types of application. (1) Particular beliefs and behaviors required of the one who follows Christ and directly commanded by the New Testament (A1) and (2) Beliefs and behaviors required of followers of Christ because words spoken to one group of people at one time in one location now have new significance in light of the person and work of Christ and God's unfolding revelation of himself and his plans (A2). Further, this chapter has aimed to show that both types of application are taught by Scripture and laid upon the preacher as part of their responsibility in preaching God's truth.

By investigating two key passages, Titus 2 and 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2, in conjunction with a variety of New Testament examples (Matt 5; 1 Cor 9:9-12; Heb 3-4), it has been shown that the preacher is responsible for preaching the indicatives of the gospel together with the imperatives that describe the Christian life. Further, these imperatives often involve applying the significance of words spoken to particular believers at particular times and in particular places to new groups of believers and situations by viewing them in light of the person and work of Christ and God's unfolding revelation of himself and his plans. What Jesus did in teaching and applying the New Testament, the apostles also did, and they then laid the same pattern upon preachers down to this day. Preachers are responsible for working on both A1 and A2 types of application as they engage with the text of Scripture, and they are to preach with authority, seeking to correct, rebuke, exhort, challenge, encourage and train in righteousness. In so doing, they are not usurping the Spirit's role, but rather fulfilling their obligation to preach faithfully. As they do so, they ought to pray for the Spirit's convicting work, that the hearer might be struck by the nature and significance of Jesus's lordship and so seek to live out a life that is pleasing to him in every way.

CHAPTER 3

TRAINING PREACHERS TO DEVELOP BIBLICALLY
FAITHFUL, REVELEVANT APPLICATION

Given that the preacher's job is to apply Scripture in both A1 and A2 senses,

what understanding and skills are required by the preacher who wishes to apply Scripture

in a faithful and relevant way? This chapter will argue that the preacher must overcome

certain elements of the protestant, western intellectual heritage if he wishes to have a

more biblical understanding of the connection between application and meaning. This in

turn will lead to a more recursive understanding of the relationship between exegesis and

application. Following from this, I will investigate how the goal of biblical teaching leads

to a helpful model of Scripture's work in the Christian life. That is, Scripture shapes

categories of right (and wrong) *behavior*, commends *beliefs* which explain and make

sense of these categories, and trains *affections* so that Christians are rightly motivated to

perform these behaviors for God's glory. Finally, given the significance of the goal of

preaching and the preacher's place in God's economy, the importance of the preacher's

personal engagement with the truth that they preach will be examined.

**Overcoming the Dichotomies Inherent in the Protestant
Western Intellectual Heritage**

Chapter 2 began by observing how Gary Findley and Peter Greenwood, two

evangelicals from a reformed tradition, engage with the idea of application. They are two

examples of a much broader phenomenon. What the preacher believes about God, his

gospel, and his world results in certain hermeneutical and homiletical strategies for

engaging with Scripture. Every preacher stands at a particular point in history where his

worldview has been affected not only by the Bible but by the intellectual tradition to

which he belongs. The first task in this chapter is to investigate some of the forces that shape our understanding of hermeneutics and homiletics and show how these result in strategies for reading and applying (or not applying!) Scripture.

In her epistemological treatise *Loving to Know*, Esther Meek speaks of what she terms our "default mode" of making sense of the world. This default mode involves a series of widely presumed dichotomies: Knowledge is opposed to belief; facts stand over against opinions and interpretation; reason is opposed to faith and emotion; theory is opposed to application and action; science is opposed to art, religion, and authority.[1] Meek suggests that all of these default ways of categorizing the world reflect a faulty epistemology that can be rooted in "the Western tradition of ideas and culture."[2] In a similar vein, J. de Waal Dryden talks of the set of "modernist bifurcations" that plague the present day reader of Scripture: "being/doing, meaning/significance, critical/confessional, fact/value, head/heart, indicative/imperative, and history/theology."[3] Despite describing them as modernist, Dryden goes on to argue that many of the same bifurcations plague post-modernism,[4] and find their foundations in the western philosophical tradition. He shows in detail the way that Plato defined knowledge as unchangeable and thus opposed it to belief.[5] Where modernism emphasized the certainty and objectivity of knowledge, post-modernism countered with the contingent nature of

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[1] For a full list see Esther L. Meek, *Loving to Know: Introducing Covenant Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 8-9.

[2] Meek, *Loving to Know*, 6.

[3] J. de Waal Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom: Recovering the Formative Agency of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), xviii.

[4] Dryden argues that post-modernism, while being opposed to modernism at almost every turn, failed to question modernism's presupposition concerning the nature of knowledge. Where modernism attempted to obtain objectivity, post-modernism countered with the totally encultured condition of the knower. The result for both paradigms is an understanding of the reader/observer/knower as the "sovereign subject" who stands over the thing being known. Rather than trying to heal the bifurcations noted previously, post-modernism just adopted the opposite pole to modernism. Where modernism preferred facts, post-modernism privileged values, where modernism favored the head, post-modernism opted for the heart etc. (See the discussion in Dryden, *Hermeneutic*, 4-9).

[5] Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 11.

knowledge resulting in skepticism. Neither option leads the preacher to read the Bible in a way that respects the nature and purpose of Scripture.

As significant as these dichotomies are for Protestant Evangelicals approaching the task of applying Scripture, they are not the only forces at work that make the task complex. For many, these dichotomies are reinforced by the impact of Luther's law/gospel distinction.[6] Dryden shows that the primacy of justification over sanctification with regards to soteriology in the Protestant tradition leads at best to ambivalence towards, or at worst suspicion of, good works.[7] As much as Protestant theology ascribes an important place to works in its theology of sanctification, the priority of justification leads to a natural suspicion of any mention of works, or of the actions of Christians seeking to live a life of good works.

This position leads to hermeneutical strategies that mis-shape the reading and application of Scripture. Dryden identifies a typical example.[8] When a passage mentions a high calling to a changed life (e.g., Matt 5:17-48; Col 3:12-17; 2 Pet 1:3-15) preachers often follow a four-step process. (1) They notice the demand for a life shaped by Christian convictions; (2) They note that nobody can possibly actually fulfil these demands; (3) They explain that Jesus met the demands in our place so that we will not be condemned; (4) They call on the hearer to believe in Jesus's imputed righteousness. Over time, the repetition of this pattern trains the hearer to see a confession of guilt and a prayer for forgiveness as the only possible response to a call to godliness. While this process emphasizes the significance of justification by faith, significant elements are lost. Sermons in this tradition often shortchange explanations of the goodness of the virtues to

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[6] Note that Dryden does not deal at any depth with Luther himself. Modern appropriations of Luther's law/gospel dichotomy rarely match the richness or nuance of Luther's own position. However, the point here is that modern appropriations (or even misunderstandings) of Luther continue to play a significant part in the hermeneutics of many preachers.

[7] Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 74-77.

[8] Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 75-76.

which Scripture calls us, fail to show why they are good in light of God's character and created order, and fall short of challenging the hearer to mortify sin and put on righteousness.

The move from gospel demand to a prayer for forgiveness is not the only homiletical strategy that potentially distorts Scripture. Another prominent strategy embedded in the way that many preachers are taught to preach holds potential traps. The practice of finding the big idea and then preaching the big idea, while helpful, if used without reflection introduces a series of unhealthy practices into the preaching process. The method, formulated and popularized in its modern form by Haddon Robinson, has been refined and integrated in various ways into preaching training curriculums all over the evangelical world.[9]

In the Proclamation Trust tradition, this takes the form of "getting it right" and "putting it across."[10] Both Robinson's "big idea" and the Proclamation Trust's "getting it right" put a high priority on the use of grammatico-historical tools to carefully read and articulate the truth of the passage. The problem is that while the importance of application is often acknowledged in these methods, the emphasis of the process lies in communication, not transformation. With the best intentions in the world, the preacher's job becomes communicating a correct exegesis of the passage, not changing lives.

The potentially unhealthy emphasis of the method can be seen by reflecting on a more biblically aware description of this two-step process. If we were to say the preacher's job is to "shape his own beliefs, affections and actions in light of the text" and

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[9] For a full formulation of the method see Haddon Robinson. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980).

[10] The Proclamation Trust is a prominent U.K. evangelical organization whose express purpose is training biblical preachers. The Proclamation Trust runs Cornhill preaching trainer courses in many parts of the U.K., South Africa, and Australia. They are also closely associated with and have heavily influenced the Simeon Trust workshops in the United States. The ideas of "getting it right" and "putting it across" are explained and detailed in the South African Evangelical Network Trust (Entrust) prospectus from 2011: The Evangelical Network Trust, "The Evangelical Network Trust 2011 Resource Guide," 2011, https://www.christianbooks.co.za/wp-content/uploads/The-Evangelical-Network-Trust-2011-Resource-Guide.pdf.

"encourage others to do the same," we immediately see the potential gaps in the original formulation. As much as "getting it right" could mean "shape his own beliefs, affections and actions in light of the text," it is unlikely to communicate that kind of breadth or depth, particularly given our cultural heritage and the dichotomies previously outlined.

A third strategy, which takes the importance of application seriously, is Walter Kaiser Jr.'s principlizing approach to Scripture.[11] According to Kaiser, the Bible is full of details that help us to understand what is meant in the text. But because our situation is different from that of the original authors and recipients, we need a way to move from the context of the text to our context. In his own words, Kaiser's desire is to help the preacher see "that the task of interpreting a text was not concluded until the reader or interpreter had carried what the text meant over to the present day and said what it now means."[12] Kaiser explains principlizing as follows: "To 'principlize' is to [re]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."[13] Kaiser follows Robinson in seeking the big idea of the text and then abstracting that idea into a timeless general principle which can then be applied at other times and in other cultures.[14]

It is important not to oversimplify Kaiser's process or misunderstand his motives. His application of his principles to issues such as slavery and euthanasia displays a thoughtful and nuanced approach to complex ethical issues.[15] The problem lies in the way principlizing strips biblical principles of their locatedness. Scripture

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[11] Walter C. Kaiser Jr.,"A Principlizing Model," in *Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary T. Meadors, Counterpoints Bible & Theology. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 19-50.

[12] Kaiser Jr., *"A Principlizing Model,"* 21.

[13] Kaiser Jr., *"A Principlizing Model,"* 22.

[14] Kaiser Jr., *"A Principlizing Model,"* 22-26.

[15] Kaiser Jr., *"A Principlizing Model,"* 27-30, 36-42.

unfortunately functions as a springboard to illustrate eternal "ideas" and "truths" that need to be removed from their context so that they can be applied in abstraction.[16] Furthermore, application is seen as a process that is almost independent of grasping the passage. Application is what is done after the passage is understood, not as part of the process of understanding.

Each of the three strategies, despite the best of intentions, owe too much to the dichotomies raised by Meek and Dryden. As such, they fall short of a full-orbed and biblical engagement with God's Word. A way of understanding more fully how God intends his Word to be engaged with is necessary. Chapter 2 explained that the work of God in the gospel has transformation as its goal. The gospel is not simply a declaration of our sinfulness and a call to cry out for forgiveness. God is at work bringing the life that Christ has won into existence in the life of the believer. As we seek to understand how that takes place, it is vital to see that the Bible strongly rejects a notion of understanding or meaning that is divorced from application.

John Frame criticizes the general character of all the approaches to Scripture we have just examined. Frame speaks of "a certain false distinction between 'meaning' and 'application'" that he finds common. He states, "Over and over, preachers (and others) try to proclaim the 'meaning' of the text and then its 'application'—the first is 'what it means,' the second 'what it means to us.' Sometimes we are told that we must understand 'what it means' before we can understand 'how it applies.' The meaning 'comes first,' the applications is 'based on' the meaning."[17] He is frustrated with this

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[16] The ideas that underlie my response to Kaiser were formed by Daniel Doriani (Daniel M. Doriani. "A Response to Walter C. Kaiser Jr.," in *Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary T. Meadors, Counterpoints Bible & Theology. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009], 51-56). and Kevin Vanhoozer (Kevin J. Vanhoozer. "A Response to Walter C. Kaiser Jr.," in *Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary T. Meadors, Counterpoints Bible & Theology. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009], 57-63).

[17] John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, *A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co, 1987), 82.

view because it fails in practice. What a text means and how it applies are not easily disentangled.

Frame argues that application is neither independent of meaning, nor opposed to it, but of its essence. He illustrates his position using the eighth commandment: Do not steal. He ponders two Bible readers who come upon the commandment. One of them decides that the commandment includes a prohibition against embezzlement, while the other decides that embezzlement lies outside of the range of the command. Frame concludes that they are not just talking about the application of the commandment, but the meaning of the commandment. He explains further:

> Knowing the meaning of a sentence is not merely being able to replace it with an equivalent sentence (e.g., replacing the Hebrew sentence with the English sentence "Thou shalt not steal"). An animal could be trained to do that. Knowing the meaning is being able to use the sentence, to understand its implications, its powers, its applications. Imagine someone saying that he understands the meaning of a passage of Scripture but doesn't know at all how to apply it. Taking that claim literally would mean that he could answer no questions about the text, recommend no translations into other languages, draw no implications from it, or explain none of its terms in his own words. Could we seriously accept such a claim? When one lacks knowledge of how to "apply" a text, his claim to know the "meaning" becomes an empty—meaningless—claim. Knowing the meaning, then, is knowing how to apply. The meaning of Scripture is its application.[18]

Ultimately, application must be seen as crucial to meaning because of the biblical relationship between knowledge and obedience. Frame points out that knowledge of God leads to obedience and that obedience to God leads to knowledge.[19] In fact, knowledge and obedience are so closely tied that they are often used in apposition to describe each other.[20] This is why false teachers are not only known by what they teach, but particularly by the fruit of their lives (Matt 7:15-20; 2 Cor 11:13-15; Titus 1:15-16).

Knowledge and obedience are not identical, but they are inseparable in biblical

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[18] Frame, *Knowledge of God*, 66-67.

[19] Frame cites John 14:15, 21; 17:26; 2 Pet 1:3, 5; 2:18-20; John 7:17; Eph 3:17-19; 2 Tim 2:25ff; 1 John 3:16, Prov 1:7; 15:33; Is 33:6. Frame, *Knowledge of God*, 43.

[20] Frame, *Knowledge of God*, 43.

understanding. They are inseparable because of the nature of the God who makes himself known through Scripture. The Bible tells us that God is the Lord, the creator and sustainer of all the universe, whose character is constant (Gen 1:1; Gen 15:2; Deut 10:17; Num 23:19; Mal 3:6; Heb 1:3; Rev 4:1). He is loving, faithful, holy, and righteous (Exod 34:6; Ps 33:4-5; Isa 6:3). Thus, to know him as Lord is to believe that what he speaks is always true and good. To hear him speak and not to obey what is comprehended is to deny what we know of God as the Lord. God finds the idea that we might comprehend his Words and fail to act abhorrent, and so should we (Jas 1:22-25).

We can go one step further. Knowing God who is the Lord heals not only the supposed division between knowledge and obedience but resolves many of the other dichotomies raised by Meek and Dryden. For example, faith is not opposed to knowledge. The Bible calls on us to know the Lord. When we know the Lord, we know him to be characterized by all of the attributes just seen. This knowledge calls directly for dependence, trust, faith. Faith is not a strenuous attempt to believe what is essentially unbelievable, but rather an appropriate response of dependence upon the God who has made himself known as the only one fully worthy of our trust.

Putting these truths together with the previous chapter it becomes clear that the shape of the gospel, the nature of Scripture, and the character of God lead to the necessity of undoing the fundamental dichotomies of meaning and application, knowledge and obedience, and knowledge and faith that lead evangelical preachers to hermeneutical strategies that, while aimed at teaching us to read Scripture and live faithfully by it, end up undermining that purpose. With these truths in place, it is time to examine the implications for the preaching task.

Application as an Element of Meaning

What habits are necessary for sermon preparation that develops application as a step in comprehending the passage and *not* as an activity subsequent to grasping the

meaning of the text?

The first step, although obvious, is to accept that application is not a step away from Scripture, but rightly integrated, represents another (and perhaps deeper) attempt to understand the meaning of the passage. Just as utilizing the tools of grammar to understand what a passage says is part of rightly grasping a passage, thinking about what we do with what is said is also a necessary part of grasping the meaning of the text.

The importance of action for understanding is a well attested reality in the field of education. David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) has had a significant impact on the nature of education since its development in the 1970s and 1980s. Kolb's theory suggests that "deep learning" or learning that results in growth and change in the learner, involves a complex cycle of engagement with experience of the world. Kolb posits that deep learning involves moving repeatedly through four distinct but inter-related phases of learning: Experiencing, Reflecting, Thinking, and Acting.[21] Experience provides the information or data that our brains then use to reflect (e.g., by remembering how this new sensory information relates to previously remembered information or relates to previous experiences). Following from reflection, we being to think or theorize about how the information that has been reflected on fits into our worldview. In this stage the learner generates abstractions, evaluates, and plans for the future. Finally, the learner acts in light of the evaluation, planning, and engagement undertaken in the previous stage. Acting is not the end of learning, because acting creates new experiences that can be further reflected on, spurring the learner around the cycle again.[22]

Certain key points should be noted. (1) According to Kolb, learning can start at any point in the cycle. (2) Deep learning is not a matter of going around the cycle once,

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[21] See Alice Y. Kolb and David A. Kolb, "Eight Important Things to Know About The Experiential Learning Cycle," *Australian Educational Leader* 40, no. 3 (2018): 8.

[22] The description of the elements involved in each stage are indebted to James Zull's descriptions: James E. Zull, *The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning*, 1st ed (Sterling, VA: Stylus Pub, 2002), 21.

but about going around the cycle repeatedly—learning is not linear but spirals between different stages. The point is that the sense that we make of our experience of the world changes our understanding and models of how the world works and this results in new and different actions. Our actions are a key part of the way in which we test whether our knowledge matches with reality. (3) Learning is never as neat as moving step-by-step around the cycle; it is possible to skip stages or to move from one stage back to a previous stage before moving forward. (4) It is possible to move around the stages very quickly (i.e., in under a second) or over an extended period (i.e., hours, days, weeks, months, or even years).

James Zull has done extensive work on the way in which the learning cycle maps onto the structure of the human brain. When Zull was introduced to ELT, he "was skeptical … at first. Surely there were many other ways to explain learning. It seemed too simple, too arbitrary."[23] However, reflection and research led him to see that the stages of ELT correlate with the way that the brain receives, makes sense of, and acts on information—a process that is physically reflected in the structure of the brain. According to Zull, our brains normally engage with the world in the following way:

> Sensory input could come from the outside world or from our own body, but once those signals have entered the *sensory part of the cortex*, they flow first through the *integrative part of the brain nearest the sensory part*, then through the *integrative part nearest the motor brain*, and then to the *motor brain* itself. Once action has been initiated, that action is detected by the sensory brain, so the output of the brain becomes new sensory input.[24]

The bolded words represent independent brain structures, the function of which maps very closely to the kinds of activities involved in each of Kolb's four stages. In Zull's own words, "the learning cycle arises naturally from the structure of the brain."[25]

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[23] Zull, *The Art of Changing*, 14.

[24] Zull, *The Art of Changing,* 16, (emphasis mine).

[25] Zull, *The Art of Changing*, 19.

If in place of Zull's repeated references to evolution as his explanatory framework, it is noted that the created world is the world that God has made, it becomes clear that God has designed the human brain to engage with the created world in particular ways. Further, given that ELT reflects the created way in which our brains function, it is not surprising that deep learning and growth comes from engaging with the world in a way that correlates with God's design.

The implications of this for the meaning/application distinction are obvious but deserve to be stated. Application is the way in which we work out whether what we know is true. Zull states, "[n]o matter what ideas our front cortex has created, we cannot know if they are true until they have been tested in a concrete and active way. Until we do that, as Sophocles said, our knowledge is 'fanciful.'"[26] Thus, when the preacher exhorts the hearers to live changed lives in light of the passage he is engaged in understanding the meaning of the passage.[27] Part of the preaching preparation process, if biblically faithful application is the goal, must be formulating application and then "testing" it back against the context, language, and ideas of the passage being taught. Does the application of the truths of this text in the lives of those hearing the sermon "make sense" in light of the original context and communication?

The preacher needs to build habits in sermon preparation that involve the development of application as part of the process of understanding the meaning of the text and not as a leap away from the text. At the very least this must mean seeing the preparation process as an unfolding act of comprehending God's meaning. As the preacher reads and re-reads, they are seeking the meaning of the text. As they unpack metaphors, notice logical connections, and discern structure, they are engaged with

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[26] Zull, *The Art of Changing*, 204.

[27] It is possible for the preacher to exhort the hearer to unfaithful or unwise actions. Where this happens, it represents a misunderstanding of the passage. The key point is that the desire to apply the passage and exhort the hearer to change is not the source of the misunderstanding.

understanding the meaning of the text. As they read in commentaries the thoughts and observations of other readers of the same passage, they are developing meaning. And as they reflect on the contexts of their hearers and think about how the truths taught in the passage relate to those contexts, they are unfolding meaning. Further, until present application is considered, the full meaning of the text has not been found.

Just as the ideas of commentators need to be tested by the text, ideas about possible application must also to be tested by the text. The preacher should ask questions as they develop application like: Would the original author recognize this modern-day application of this passage as valid? Why or Why Not? Does the preacher's present application of the passage engage with the metaphors and relationships between key doctrines unfolded in the text? How does the preacher's application illuminate or enrich the present-day hearer's comprehension of the meaning of the text? The development of skills in asking and wisely answering these kinds of questions over time will lead the preacher towards more faithful application that will also lead to a deeper grasp of Scripture.

Being Shaped by the Text to Right Behavior, Faithful Belief, and Godly Affections

With a clearer and healthier understanding of the interplay between meaning and application in place, the outstanding problem involves the method by which we move from the context of the original hearers to its meaning in the lives of present-day hearers. The crucial starting point is the purpose of God declared in Scripture. As we saw in chapter 2, God's goal in Scripture is to conform believers to the likeness of his Son. What is required is a clear and consistent way of thinking about what this shaping looks like. Dryden provides a suggestive schema that offers the basis for a path forward.

Dryden's goal in *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom* is to explore the history of Protestant reading of Scripture and to suggest an alternative way of engaging with the Bible. He notes that in the academy the reading of Scripture has tended towards engaging

with Scripture as "history," "theology," or "ethics."[28] He describes each of these modes of reading as "prospecting" modes. What he means is that the reader "mines" the text for historical, theological, or ethical information that can be used towards a particular end. This unfortunately results in the reader supplying their own goal and then "sifting" the text for the sake of the reader's project. While he acknowledges the validity of each of these enterprises up to a point, he suggests that they ultimately lead to the reader standing as a "sovereign subject" over the text. These reading strategies objectify the text by treating it as a source of data rather than as the Word of God whose purpose is to transform the reader.

In place of these strategies, Dryden aims for what he calls a "wisdom" approach to the text. At the heart of his wisdom approach is the idea that the aim of God in Scripture is to create a people who are shaped as moral agents with well-ordered desires. He suggests that the Bible does this by leading us towards right actions, right reasons for our actions, and right motivations.

The relationship between the categories is important. God is leading his people towards godliness, and godliness has a concrete form in the world. The Scriptures teach us about categories of actions that are good and wise and right because they conform to the character of God and the order God has created in the world. The Bible also trains the reader to reject other categories of actions because they are abhorrent to God and fail to work in a healthy way in God's creation. Actions involve things like murder, adultery, truth telling, service, kindness, but also extend to worship, praying, gathering, and singing to name only a few.

At the level of action, a Christian perspective on the good or evil of specific behaviors overlaps significantly with other worldviews. For example, an atheist, a Buddhist, and a Muslim might all agree with the Christian that murder is wrong. But this

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[28] Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 6.

agreement conceals the often radical differences between worldviews concerning the reasons and motivations for behavior. God is not simply interested in helping us to appreciate classes of actions, but he situates these actions within a web of reasons and motivations. This is where Christianity begins to distinguish itself from other worldviews. The Bible does not just teach us "ethics" in terms of commandments, but it "contextualizes commands in ways that make them intelligible and desirable. The Bible projects a 'moral vision' that renders injunctions to self-denial and love for God and neighbor both reasonable and attractive."[29] Thus, while the atheist and the Christian might both believe that murder is wrong, they will do so for different reasons. At the heart of a Christian worldview will be truths like the fact that humans are made in God's image and that to desecrate God's image is to reject God (Gen 9:6; Jas 3:9-10).

God's goal in Christ is to create a new people, zealous for his honor and good works. He does this by shaping our understanding of the new life we have in Christ. This life is characterized by classes of actions, behaviors, and habits. But these actions, behaviors, and habits are encouraged in a context which clothes them with the reasons that these actions are not only right but *good*. Scripture explains the reasons that the good is good by situating God's commands within the context of his character displayed in Christ and so shapes our hearts to desire what is good as God's children. Here-in lies the explanation for the categories that I have been using from the beginning of this paper of behavior, belief, and affection. God teaches what life in Christ looks like, why it's so good, and thus shapes our desires to love the good and to live for God's good in the world.

Scripture constantly addresses all three categories, behavior, beliefs, and affections and thus the preacher who faithfully teaches the Scripture will seek to preach each passage of Scripture by unfolding the relationships between behavior, belief, and

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[29] Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, xxi.

affection inherent in the text, understood in its biblical context. We will explore the significance of each of these categories in turn.

Behaviors

The phrase "good works" is used 23 times in the New Testament. A life of "good works" is one of God's goals in Christ's work on the cross (Titus 2:14), it is what God creates in the man of God by Scripture (2 Tim 3:17), and it is constantly commended as desirable for God's people (Acts 9:36; 2 Cor 9:8; Eph 2:10; Col 1:10; 2 Thess 2:17; Titus 3:8). Faithful biblical application will not just tell the congregation that they cannot fulfil God's righteousness by their actions—although this point must be made—but will commend the goodness of godliness.

As we have already seen in seed form, an essential element of understanding the goodness of good works involves situating those works in relation to the nature of God and his created order. But it is worth exploring this further. Often, in an attempt to be clearly Christian, evangelical preachers explain the goodness of good works solely in terms of their relation to God's character, afraid that any description of the goodness of good works because of their outcome in this life involves a resort to categories that are less than gospel categories. Yet, by constantly reducing things to "ultimate" or "spiritual" categories, it is possible to distort the Scriptures.

For example, I remember a man approaching me one Sunday after a sermon on the idolatry of work. He said to me, "We only ever get told one thing about work, that it's dangerous. I do not remember ever being told how to do my work, or what benefit my work brings to others. I'm just told that it's dangerous and I need to not rely on it but rely on God. Work is idolatry!" On reflection, I realized he was right. We had a grid through which most behaviors were passed. When it came to work, almost all we were taught was that it created the danger of idolatry. By using "ultimate" or "spiritual" categories, we had certainly imbibed one biblical truth, but our picture of work was not healthy.

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A belief in the goodness of God's created order should lead to someone hearing that work provides for the needs of the worker and their family, as well as providing generously for others in need (Eph 4:28; 2 Thess 3:11-12; 1 Tim 5:8). Each of these things involves an earthly rather than heavenly good, but they are never-the-less right and real reasons for work and for seeing the good of labor in the service of others. Of course, we must also be encouraged that work is an opportunity to serve as if serving the Lord (Col 3:23-24). But the crucial thing to notice here is that the "ultimate spiritual" reason does not render all other reasoning about the goodness of good works moot. Scripture engages at both levels as it commends concrete behaviors to us as an outworking of our relationship with Christ.

Careful engagement with the nature of behaviors commended and rejected in Scripture, along with the intricate interplay of "earthly" and "spiritual" reasoning in the Bible, would lead to a fuller and richer explication of the Christian life that would avoid the charge of reductionism.

This leads naturally to reflection on the significance of examples in preaching. The great debate in the Dutch Reformed church in the 1930's was between two schools— one called the Redemption Historical school of preaching and the other labelled the Exemplary school. For anyone who traces their roots back to the Redemption Historical School[30] the idea of "exemplary" preaching creates a significant level of suspicion and discomfort. But, despite the obvious potential flaws related to moralism, it is vital that preachers who wish to faithfully apply Scripture rehabilitate the value of example.

Eric Watkins engages with this issue in his dissertation on preaching. He notes that the New Testament explicitly calls Christians to imitate God, Jesus, the Apostles,

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[30] Although most Sydney Evangelical preachers would be unaware of the debate, the influence of Vos, Ridderbos, and Greidanus on Graeme Goldsworthy who lectured at Moore College for many years and shaped Sydney's biblical-theological approach to preaching has impacted nearly every Sydney Evangelical in some way.

Church Leaders, other saints, and good behavior.[31] Indeed, he notes "[i]t is remarkable that the mimetic word group is employed so broadly and explicitly. Even where the mimetic word group is not explicitly used, the idea is none-the-less implicitly present."[32] The Bible is not afraid to set forth Jesus himself, the lives of the apostles, and the actions of other followers of Jesus as exemplary, because these examples are seen as situated within the purpose of Christ's work for us. Christ calls Christians to new life and that new life makes sense and is portrayed as attractive precisely by the behavior of Jesus and his followers. Biblically faithful application should call attention to the lives of the saints as examples of a life of faith and repentance in order to encourage God's people to good works.

Recall Dryden's explanation of the importance of actions, placed within a particular web of reasons and motivations. The actions of faithful believers as examples become moralism only when they are disconnected from the broader narrative of Scripture. However, rightly situated, examples draw our hearts towards good works as an outworking of discipleship. Dryden comments:

> If biblical texts are wisdom texts, then their chief intention will be to foster understanding and action determined by love for God and neighbor, demonstrated in obedience to the will of God and practical sacrifice for others. When the Bible teaches theology, it promotes this kind of wisdom; when it gives practical moral instruction it is also promoting wisdom, just from a different angle.[33]

In short, if we are regularly setting exemplary behavior and moral commandments in the context of union with Christ, we may regularly highlight faithful examples of Christian living without the fear that we are falling into moralism. Not only is this permissible, the

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[31] He cites Eph 5:1; 1 Cor 11:1; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 2 Thess 3:7, 9; Phil 3:17; Heb 13:7; 1 Thess 2:14; Heb 6:12; 3 John 11. See Eric Brian Watkins, "The Drama of Preaching: Participating in the Work of God in the History of Redemption" (PhD diss., Theologische Tniversiteit van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland te Kampen, 2016), http://theoluniv.ub.rug.nl/81/2/2016%20Watkins%20Dissertation.pdf, 135-136.

[32] Watkins, "The Drama of Preaching," 136.

[33] Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 47.

nature of Scripture suggests that it is essential!

Beliefs

        The second element vital for forming healthy application is the area of belief. Beliefs are just as much applications as behaviors. God wants to change the ways that his servants think about him and his world (Rom 12:2). Faithful application of the text will involve reflecting on what beliefs are encouraged and what beliefs are challenged by any given text. In thinking through belief as an area of application, two key things should be noticed.

        Preaching a biblical text engages with truths about God, his creation, and the shape of godliness that are contextually controlled. That is, the truths chosen by the author of the passage will relate to his particular purpose with the original audience. But these ideas are unlikely to be the only place in the Bible that those ideas are found. This means that as we read passages of Scripture we are not being taught about truths as abstract ideas, but rather truths as applied to the task of living as servants of the risen Lord in particular circumstances in life. The beliefs and the circumstances in which they are commended or condemned are all part of the process of shaping disciples.

        An important corollary follows: the preacher must be careful to exhort people to believe the truths in a particular passage in relation to the other truths and issues involved in the passage, at the same time as being aware of the other uses of the same truth in the Bible. The concrete calls to belief in a particular passage must be controlled by the context of the passage, but never applied in a way that is abhorrent to other parts of Scripture. This is because the Bible applies truths about God and his world in varied contexts in varied ways. We might point for example to the death of Christ, which is appealed to as a demonstration of God's love (John 3:16; Rom 5:8), a display of God's righteousness (Rom 3:21-26), the means by which God reconciled Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:16), an example of humility (Phil 2:1-11), the means by which our trespasses are

forgiven (Eph 1:7), and a call to perseverance in suffering (1 Pet 2:20-21) to name but a few of the potential implications of Christ's death.

Healthy application involves avoiding the twin dangers of importing all the possibilities of the meaning of Christ's death into the text being preached or preaching the text in a way that denies the other ways that the truth is used in Scripture. For example, it is right and appropriate to claim that Christ's death is the means of our forgiveness. The danger comes when other truths are denied in order to elevate the importance of that belief. If the preacher were to say, "Christ's death is not an example for us to follow but an act of sacrifice on our behalf," he would be in danger of twisting the truth. Christ's death is quite clearly an example for Christians to follow. It would be better to say, "Christ's death is not first and foremost and example for us to follow." The preacher needs to preach the truth of one passage in a way that calls on people to believe those truths without denying other biblical truths.

At the same time, most passages deal not just with one truth but a variety of truths. Expositional preaching is not the same as delivering the hearer a neat systematic theology, but faithful preaching recognizes the value of training followers of Jesus in how to relate key truths of Scripture to one another in different circumstances. In other words, good expositional preaching will form the hearer's systematic theology over time. Good application in shaping beliefs will involve an awareness not just of the truths in any given passage but the relationship between the differing truths in the passage and the applications drawn. Good application will train God's people how to relate their various beliefs and engage them wisely to find strategies that promote living faithfully for Jesus in a complex and sin-scarred world.

A final observation about the nature of belief in application involves an awareness of, and engagement with, specific barriers to belief encountered by the hearers of the sermon. In Duane and Diane Elmer's appropriation of Kolb, they point to the importance of identifying barriers to change and finding strategies for dealing with

barriers when it comes to human transformation.[34] Questions such as "What will important people think of me if I adopt this belief?" will have a big impact on whether someone accepts a truth from Scripture or seeks to avoid it. Healthy encouragement to accept a belief or deny an untruth involves an ability to articulate potential barriers to belief and help people to reflect on how they might overcome those barriers. In a world where beliefs about things such as the sinfulness of homosexual sexual behavior or complementarian practice will likely be ridiculed, helping hearers to develop strategies for holding their beliefs in the face of opposition will be an important part of promoting healthy belief through preaching.

Affections

The third element of formation involves the significance of Christian affections. Here again, the modernist dichotomies reign, particularly in academia. The enmity that has been posited between feelings and truth affects our culture at a very deep level. Thus, when it comes to healthy application, it is vital to notice how Scripture holds emotion and truth together to address the affections of the hearer.

When my wife was a teenager, her wise Christian mother regularly reminded her not to trust her feelings. It was a sensible piece of advice, particularly during the emotional tumult of the teenage years. However, as a principle of interpretation or as the foundation of knowledge, the same piece of advice becomes dangerous. The Scriptures do not seek to replace unhealthy emotions by dispassionate reason. Rather, the Bible encourages us to foster godly affections in the place of ungodliness. In the place of anger, jealousy, lust, and greed, the Scriptures encourage believers to joy, kindness, compassion, and love.

In God's world, emotions and thoughts are not opposed to each other but are

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[34] Muriel I. Elmer and Duane Elmer, *The Learning Cycle: Insights for Faithful Teaching from Neuroscience and the Social Sciences* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), chapters 8-9.

both expressions of a heart turned either towards or away from God. The Bible contains very little evidence of the heart/mind distinction so common in modern Western thought. The heart is the center of human life, and the heart both thinks (Matt 9:4; 15:19; Heb 4:12) and feels (Acts 2:26; Rom 9:2). The heart is also the source of belief (Rom 10:9-10) and unbelief (Mark 16:14). Likewise, the mind thinks, desires, and loves (Matt 16:23; Mark 12:30; Eph 2:3; Phil 2:2). Minds and hearts are not the source of separate ways of knowing, but rather descriptions of the deepest parts of human identity and they are directed either towards God or towards rebellion. Faithful discipleship involves repenting of ungodly thoughts and unhealthy emotions and training our hearts and minds to appropriate and godly affections.

The importance of emotion for thinking has received a lot of attention in the field of neuroscience in recent decades. Research by Antonio Damasio and Lisa Feldmann Barrett has overturned the centuries old argument about the enmity between thinking and feeling. Nowhere more so than in decision making. Research suggests that humans are incapable of making decisions without emotions. Damasio furnishes numerous examples of how patients with impairments to key emotional centers in the brain are unable to make simple decisions, ranging from which appointment to accept when offered options through to decisions about what job to do or where to live.[35] Feldmann Barrett explains, "Our new knowledge of brain anatomy now compels us to go one step further. Affect is not just necessary for wisdom; it's also irrevocably woven into the fabric of every decision."[36] Just as Zull has shown that the structure of the brain and how it processes information is directly related to Kolb's learning cycle, the structure of the brain means that emotion is involved in all decision making. Feldmann Barrett

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[35] Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*, rev. ed. with a new preface (London: Vintage, 2006).

[36] Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain*, (London: Pan Books, 2017), 80, Kindle.

declares bluntly, "at the level of brain circuitry, no decision can be free of affect."[37]

One important implication of this truth for preaching involves the nature of persuasion. According to Rachel Ruttan and Loran Nordgren,

> Affect profoundly influences behavior, such that nearly every category of psychological functioning—cognition, attention, physiology, perception, and memory—comes under the influence of affect. . . . But because much of this influence happens outside of conscious awareness . . . people have great difficulty appreciating the full magnitude of affect's influence.[38]

Because preachers are unaware of the significance of affect for decision making, they readily fall into the trap of thinking that persuasion is purely logical. However, as Ruttan and Nordgren explain, "If attitudes are rooted in affect (versus cognition), persuasion attempts rooted in affect (versus cognition) are more likely to succeed . . . . Like persuasion, managing affective states may require other affective states."[39]

Martin Lloyd-Jones's famous description of preaching as "Logic on fire! Eloquent reason!"[40] is not just a preacher's intuition, but a description of true preaching because of the nature of God's created order. Persuasion involves logic and affection. People's beliefs and behaviors are changed as their affections are shaped by God's truth. This means that preachers who wish to preach biblically faithful, relevant application must be aware of tone—both their tone in preaching and the tone of the passage preached, their use of language and imagery, and an awareness of the connection between affections and truth, and affections and transformation.

Two insights follow from this observation. First, the preacher's job is not just to tell people how to feel (e.g., "Rejoice!"), but to speak the glorious truths of God in a

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[37] Feldmann Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made*, 124.

[38] Rachel L. Ruttan and Loran F. Nordgren, "Perceptions of Desire: A Hot-Cold Empathy Gap Perspective," in *The Psychology of Desire*, ed. Wilhelm Hofmann and Loran F. Nordgren, (New York: The Guilford Press, 2015), 228.

[39] Ruttan & Nordgren, "Perceptions of Desire," 239.

[40] Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012), 97, Kindle.

way that leads people to experience the goodness and wonder of God in the moment of preaching. The preacher's aim must be to communicate the truths and tone of the passage through the sermon in a way that arouses the affections of the hearer. Samuel T. Logan exhorts,

> If what matters in ultimate terms is what one really loves or hates or desires or fears (each of these words being understood not as pure passions, but as Edwardsean affections), then the preacher speaking with the authority of his Lord must seek to create sermonic situations in which love for Christ *happens*, in which hatred for sin *happens*, in which desire for the blessing of God *happens*, in which fear of the consequences of sin *happens*.[41]

Second, and closely related, is the appropriate use of the elements of communication that engage the affections to achieve this goal. Jay Adams encourages preachers to use sense-appeal and storytelling as ways of engaging the hearer emotionally with the content of what is preached.[42] He posits that the imagination, or perhaps better memory, of the hearer "is activated by the preacher's evocative language so as to arouse the listener's senses and to enable him to 'experience' the event about which he speaks."[43] His preference for the word "memory" is a response to the particularly visual nature of imagination. For Adams, emotions are evoked not just by the visual but by all five senses.

Here again, Adams's intuitions match well with studies in psychology and neuroscience. For example, one particularly promising method for promoting behavior change in those struggling with addiction is Functional Imagery Training (FIT).[44] FIT involves training people struggling with behavior change (e.g., healthy eating) to

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[41] Samuel T. Logan Jr., "The Phenomenology of Preaching," in *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Samuel T. Logan Jr.. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co, 1986), 156-157.

[42] Jay E. Adams, "Sense Appeal and Storytelling," in *The Preacher and Preaching*, 350-366.

[43] Adams, "Sense Appeal and Storytelling," 354.

[44] See Jackie Andrade et al., "Elaborated Intrusion Theory: Explaining the Cognitive and Motivational Basis of Desire," in *The Psychology of Desire*, ed. Wilhelm Hofmann and Loran F. Nordgren, (New York: The Guilford Press, 2015), 29-30.

regularly imagine their goals in vivid imagery. The intervention is based on Elaborated Intrusion Theory (EIT) that suggests desire is a cognitive response to an emotional trigger, often experienced as an intrusive thought or an environmental trigger. The trigger turns into an episode of desire when mental images are elaborated. Elaboration involves "affectively charged sensory imagery that emulates the experience of achieving one's desire. This mental imagery of the target and its acquisition serve to ready the individual for target-directed behavior."[45] The theory is based on a significant body of psychological study.[46]

FIT involves training people who wish to change their behavior "to develop habits of vividly imagining future goals and the paths to their achievement."[47] To be successful, these habits need to involve "future-focused imagery" that is "positive and vivid, personally relevant, and detailed."[48] Changing eating behavior is not identical to seeing lives transformed for Christ, not least because it ignores the spiritual dimensions of change. None-the-less, the significance of the way in which the human mind functions to engage with desires suggests that dealing with change means more than just telling people that they should do something. People need to be able to experience the goodness of the thing that they are being called to, and they need to have their minds and senses engaged in picturing the future. Healthy application involves preaching that appeals to our senses as we think about the joy of living for Christ and its results.

To pursue faithful, life-changing application, Adams suggests the importance of storytelling connected with three things: (1) the use of sensuous and evocative

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[45] Andrade et. al., "Elaborated Intrusion Theory," 23.

[46] The theory also explains why fast-food advertising is effective when companies use sensory imagery and language in their advertising.

[47] Andrade et. al., "Elaborated Intrusion Theory," 30-31.

[48] Andrade et. al., "Elaborated Intrusion Theory," 31.

language, (2) the use of sound, and (3) the use of gesture.[49] All of these elements are designed to help the person who is listening to a sermon experience the truth as they hear it. As he explains, "stories can create and hold interest, make a truth clearer than the simple statement of a principle ever could, concretize abstract material, show how to implement biblical commands, and demonstrate how to make truth practical and memorable."[50]

The Preacher's Personal Engagement

As with any engagement in the mechanics of the preaching task, the previous discussion requires an attendant warning. It is possible to use emotion and reason to manipulate rather than grow people in godliness. As we finish, it is important to remember that the preacher must long for the transformation of the hearer, not for his own sake, but for the glory of God.

Perhaps the most important antidote to the potential misuse of the mechanics of healthy application is an awareness that the use of emotion, storytelling, faithful illustration, and the like should flow out of truth experienced by the preacher in their preparation. God is calling on the preacher to change, not just the congregation. Faithful preaching that is aware of behaviors, beliefs, and affections will be guarded by the preacher's own level of conviction about the truths they preach. Dabney notes sagely:

> [I]t is far more important to say that eloquence operates through all the powers of the speaker's soul . . . . Not only must the orator's reason perform the processes of perception and logic, his heart must be powerfully actuated by those processes of emotion which he seeks to propagate, his taste must thrill with those affections of sentiment which he would make ancillary to his main effect, and his will must go forth vehemently to that act to which he would decide the hearer.[51]

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[49] Adams, "Sense Appeal and Storytelling," 355-361.

[50] Adams, "Sense Appeal and Storytelling," 352.

[51] Robert Lewis Dabney, *Sacred Rhethoric or A Course of Lectures on Preaching*. (1870; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 31-32.

Ultimately, the preacher will be protected from the dangers of Greenwood's "razzle-dazzle" preaching by a commitment to personal engagement with and application of the truth preached. Thus, healthy sermon preparation must involve the preacher in time praying over the material to be taught, and reflection on personal repentance, worship, and growth. Biblically faithful, relevant application requires the preacher's own life to be exposed before the truths of Scripture. When the truth has touched the preacher, it is more likely to be spoken with the kind of conviction that will challenge the hearer to respond to the life-changing message of Christ.

Perhaps the last word should belong to Adams.

> One of the reasons why poor preaching is dull is that the preacher himself fails to experience what he is talking about as he speaks—there is no joy, sense of awe, tingling down his spine, or whatever. When *he* fails to relive the event it is almost axiomatic that his congregation will "experience" that failure. In preaching, it is not enough to talk *about* something; the preacher himself must experience it afresh.[52]

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[52] Adams, "Sense Appeal and Storytelling," 355.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE
MINISTRY PROJECT

This chapter describes the process of preparing and implementing the course

designed to achieve the goals of the project. The aim of the project was to equip students

at Moore Theological College to develop biblically faithful, relevant application in

preaching.

Preparation

Preparation for the Application Training Course fell into two parts, the

logistics required to conduct the course and the preparation of the course material.

Logistics

The logistics were relatively simple but required some forward planning.

Running the course involved recruiting students who were willing to participate in extra

learning activities outside of their regular course program. Since our academic year runs

from February to November, students enroll and elect their subjects in early February. It

was important for students to know that there would be an option to participate in my

course in the second half of the year and to factor that into their decision making. As such

I asked for expressions of interest from students as they were choosing their subjects and

timetables for the year.

To facilitate this process, it was important to communicate concrete dates and

times that the course would run. I communicated with our senior students[1] about regular

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[1] The Moore College Principal appoints 6 students each year to the Senior Student group. They
are usually students in their final year of study who have displayed leadership amongst their peers and

extracurricular activities that would affect student's ability to attend. They indicated that Tuesday afternoons would probably work best for student availability. Working from the MTC academic Calendar, times and dates for the eight weeks of the course were set as follows: 3:00-4:30pm on each of July 26, August 2, 9, 23, 30, September 12, 20, 27.[2] Classrooms for each of these dates were booked at this point.

I sent an email to all fourth-year students on the 1st of February explaining that I would be running a course on application in preaching based on my DMin studies on the dates previously mentioned and asking them to express interest in being involved. The email was sent to 36 students and resulted in 17 expressions of interest. The names were recorded for future communication.

I sent a further email to the 17 students who had expressed interest on June 20th with the Information and Participation Agreement form for the course.[3] At this point, one student decided to pull out of the course due to timing and personal reasons. I received 16 signed forms. A further student would pull out a couple of days before the course started and so the course ran with 15 participants. All 15 who commenced the course completed the course.

I decided for the sake of simplicity to administer the pre and post surveys during the course time. These were done in the first 20 minutes of the first week and the last 20 minutes of the final week of the course. To enable the surveys to be de-identified and yet still compare pre and post surveys, each student needed to receive a personal identification number. My Executive Assistant created a spreadsheet with each student's name and a random 4-digit number beside each name. This spreadsheet was only

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godliness in relationships. They meet with the Principal once a fortnight and work together to help make the community life of the college run.

[2] Illness and some complexities of the student community timetable resulted in a slight change to these dates as the course was implemented. See further details under 'Implementation' below.

[3] See appendix 1.

available to her and has never been available to me. In the week before the course commenced, an email was sent to each course participant reminding them that the course was starting and informing them of their personal identification number for use on the course surveys.

One week before the commencement of the course, my EA created a new Team in Microsoft Teams (the online platform that we use for student learning) and added all of the students to the Team. This team was used for the distribution of course notes and for ongoing communication with the participants throughout the duration of the course.

Preparation of Teaching Material

The preparation of the teaching material for the course occurred over a much longer period. I used Microsoft OneNote as the tool for organizing ideas and keeping notes. I had entered the DMin wanting to concentrate on application in preaching, and so from the beginning of the reading for my first intensive I created a separate folder in OneNote dedicated to the project. I created one document for recording key quotes, questions that arose, and ideas related to potential course content. I also created a separate document in which to record the titles of books that I thought might be useful for the sake of the project. Over the two and a quarter years between the readings for the first intensive and the writing of the Application Course I found semi-regular time, often in bursts, where I would do extra reading beyond the intensive courses for the sake of the project. I recorded extensive notes from each of these readings in the second document. The notes, ideas, and questions in these two documents supplied the raw material when it came to writing the course.

The other key element in the early stages of the preparation for the course was the work done for chapters 2 and 3 of the project. Chapter 2 allowed me to engage with some of the theological beliefs that when applied indiscriminately lead some students to

unhealthy attitudes with regards to application in preaching. The hard work of working through the biblical understanding of the place of the preacher, the Scriptures, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the transformation of God's people provided the groundwork for what would become the first two sessions of the course.

The work done in researching and writing chapter 3 then began to cement key ideas that would form the foundations of the body of the course. In particular, John Frame and J de Waal Dryden's work on the interplay between knowledge and obedience brought me to see the significance of seeing application as part of the process of seeking meaning in the text. This led to the key insight that application is not an additional step after the meaning has been understood but an essential part of the process of grasping and communicating the meaning of the text. Further, Dryden's observations about the interplay between behavior, beliefs, and affections connected with reading in the education field about Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, and Zull's neuroscientific work on how the brain learns. These connections helped me to think deeply about giving students the tools to notice and utilize observations about the emotional nature of communication in conjunction with the cognitive content of communication to create sermons that are intelligible and desirable.[4]

At various times during the two years leading up to the writing of the material, I attempted to write an outline for what might be covered in the eight weeks of a training course on application in preaching. This evolved and changed over time but it also meant at the point of coming to write the course, I had done quite a lot of thinking about key goals and ways of achieving the goals.

The nature of my job as Dean of Students and Lecturer in Ministry and Mission at College has meant that getting extended blocks of time for writing and

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[4] This language came from Dryden and became the key phrase used to summarize the goals of the course. By the end of the course, all the students could speak about the importance of creating sermons that were intelligible and desirable.

thinking has largely fallen in academic holidays. By the end of January 2022, I had completed my final DMin intensive and needed to work on the application for ethics approval for my project. This had to wait until the break in classes at Easter time. I gathered the required information and sent off the application at the end of April.

The Easter break was also the first major block of time to work on the final content of the course material. I outlined the eight weeks of content at this point and completed writing the first two sessions. The rest of the writing process happened early in June. By this point it had become clear that weeks three to six of the material would cover the interplay between behavior, belief, and affections, as well as the importance of engaging the text of Scripture from different perspectives during the preaching preparation process. The final two weeks of material concentrated on the place of the preacher in developing healthy application and the importance of engaging with genre and tone when seeking to preach transformative sermons.

Timing was quite tight at this point because I needed to get the material to my expert panel and get feedback with enough time to enact it before the commencement of the course. My expert panel consisted of three members: Dr. David Hohne, Academic Dean at Moore College, Archie Poulos, Head of the Ministry and Mission Department, and Dr. Peter Jensen, former Archbishop of Sydney and former Principle of Moore College. I supplied each of them with the course content and the evaluation form on or around June 20th and asked them to have their comments back to me by the 3rd of July. All three graciously agreed and supplied written feedback. The feedback was very positive and met the criteria that was satisfactory for running the course.

Dr. Hohne raised some questions about the academic level of the material according to the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) guidelines. This conversation was helpful and I have followed up further with another educational specialist at Moore College. It did not present any particular issues for the current version of the material but would affect assessment in the likely event that the course is expanded

and included as a 4th year elective in the MTC program. Dr. Jensen met with me and talked at depth through the broader issue of application, it was an encouraging and thought-provoking conversation. In particular, he raised the importance of placing the behavioral elements of application in the framework of a renewed relationship with God the Father through Christ in light of the gospel. He also very kindly supplied me with a two-page document containing his key reflections on the nature and importance of application.

Implementation and Overview of Material[5]

The course commenced on July 26th with 15 students. The two main complexities that were encountered during the implementation of the course were illness and a clash with the student community timetable. I had an episode of bronchitis during the week in which the 2nd session was scheduled. This meant that an extra week had to be scheduled at the end of the course. All the students were understanding and willing to turn up for the extra week. Towards the beginning of the course a student involved in the college student community program indicated that it would be helpful if we could reschedule session four of the course material for the sake of a community social event that had not been scheduled at the start of the year. He took responsibility for contacting all course members and all agreed to a makeup class on Wednesday 28th September.[6] Thus, the final timetable for the classes was: Tuesday 3:00-4:30pm on July 26, August 9, 30, September 13, 20, 27, 28 (Wednesday 11:15-12:45), October 11.

Apart from my own illness, several students were unable to make individual sessions due to illness or family bereavement. Our college practice of video recording

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[5] Implementation and Overview of Material have been included together as the record of each session gives an overview of the material as well as noting key student responses. For the full course outline handed to students see appendix 4.

[6] One student was unable to attend the make-up time but agreed to watch a video recording of the class on their own time.

classes through Microsoft Teams became invaluable. Students who were unable to attend sessions caught up by watching the material in their own time. The very high level of buy-in for the course meant that students were diligent in following up on material that they had missed.

The teaching material fell into three blocks: (1) Sessions 1 and 2: designed to show that the goal of the preacher should be the same as the goal of God in the Scriptures, to transform people to know and love Jesus and to live out their faith in him (2) Sessions 3 to 6: God in the Scriptures aims to shape his people's behaviors, beliefs, and affections and so we need to learn to engage as preachers with the interplay between behaviors, beliefs, and affections presented in each passage in light of the big doctrinal picture presented by the Scriptures as a whole. This also involves thoughtful reflection on how we engage with the context of the original author and hearers and our own context. (3) Sessions 7 and 8: designed to persuade the preacher to involve themselves personally in engaging with the Scriptures so that they preach with conviction and clarity.

Session 1

The aim of Session 1 was to persuade students that they had a biblical responsibility to engage in direct and indirect application of the Scriptures and that this was not a matter of usurping the Spirit's role.

Session 1 began with 20 minutes given over to filling out the pre survey form. All students finished the form and handed it in. The rest of this session involved engaging with an article about application written by a Sydney Anglican Minister, some teaching on the nature of application (as both direct and indirect), and on a biblical understanding of the interplay between the work of the preacher, the Holy Spirit, and the Scriptures in the transformation of God's people. The conversation on the article raised lively discussion for the students as they thought about beliefs that affected their views on application. They also engaged with the Scriptural material and asked questions such as,

"How does application relate to evangelism?" and "Doesn't the Spirit do something more than just convict?" This led to a fruitful discussion on the relationship between obedience and the ability to comprehend truth.

Session 2

The aim of Session 2 was to persuade students that application is part of the fundamental process of gaining meaning from the text and not a step subsequent to faithful biblical exposition.

Session 2 began with the issue of the way in which beliefs about the nature of the preaching task lead to certain habits in preparation. In particular, we talked about the idea of dichotomies and bifurcations raised by Meek and Dryden. Students spent considerable time wrestling with this idea, and really enjoyed talking through Dryden's observation that our beliefs about the gospel tend to truncate our preaching on areas of practical godliness. They talked about the interplay between assurance and legalism, as well as noticing that a commitment to preaching the atonement tends to lead towards focusing on forgiveness rather than the new life that is ours in Christ. The other major discussion surrounded Frame's understanding of the importance of application as part of meaning. This was a point of substantial growth and change for many students who agreed that application was an essential element of meaning but that was not how they had conceived of it before this session. They asked questions about whether meaning involved describing faithful application or the actual practice of obedience.

The final exercise involved engaging with Ephesians 6:1-3 in light of the one question: "What does this passage mean for you?" Students noticed that talking about this question led them to thinking a lot about what Paul meant when he wrote it but also about what it means for us. One student noted that she talked about her own context, then about a friend that she knew who had obeyed their father in minute details all through their adult life and even after his death, and about how she parents her own child. The group

agreed that these discussions were part of engaging with the meaning of the text.

Session 3

The aim of Session 3 was to persuade students that Christians are called to a way of life lived in obedience to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and thus that preaching ought to address the shape and nature of this obedience. Calling believers to understand, delight in, and perform the good works of the Christian life is not legalism but faithful biblical preaching in light of Christ's work.

Because of the long gap between the previous session and this session, students began by summarizing for each other what they had learned so far. We then dove into the issue of the gap between Scripture and us. I noted that this gap is often characterized as an historical gap and that history is understood as progress. The students then imagined what it might be like to read Paul's letters as a member of another congregation at the time of writing. They noticed how this changed their perspective on understanding and making sense of the letter. One student said, "You would know that Paul is your apostle, and you would want to hear what he has to say!" Another student then raised issues like gender inclusive language and slavery. Are our attitudes here based on progress, and how do we read the Scriptures on these issues in light of modern understanding? Another student responded by talking about the mistaken belief that we are more intelligent than the original audience.

We pushed further by asking how long it takes a new believer to take on the fullness of the Christian life, and how long we expect change to take. It was noted that change takes considerable time. We then talked about Ephesians 4 as an example of the interplay of behavior and belief, and we talked about how our Christian context (which had been formed by a fight with Nominalism) kept emphasizing the need to challenge works righteousness but that the non-Christian world does not even believe in the goodness of the Christian life. Therefore, we need to show that the way of life that Christ

calls us to is good and wise in this world.

We finished the session by doing an exercise examining drunkenness (from Ephesians 4) and asking why it is attractive to the non-Christian world. We noticed that thinking about the sense of inclusion and freedom that alcohol offers might be affecting the way that people hear the call to avoid drunkenness and we thought about how to explain why avoiding drunkenness is good in light of the character of God and the nature of Christ's work.

Session 4

The aim of Session 4 was to show students the connection between belief and behavior and to give students tools to think about the importance of forming worldview in their preaching and engaging with barriers to change.

This session wrestled with the nature of belief and the importance of understanding belief for application. I began explaining that belief has three elements – knowledge, assent, and trust. We discussed this in light of Frame's understanding of the relationship between obedience and knowledge and had a deep and complex conversation. We noted that comprehension and obedience are not identical but are inter-related and function recursively in our growth.

From this foundation, we moved on to discussing how beliefs are formed as part of a worldview. The implications of this involve not just teaching what is said in an individual passage but being aware of how what is said is in an individual passage plays against the broader revelation of Scripture. We talked at some length about the way that stories make truth intelligible and desirable by connecting ideas and experience in concrete examples that affect us emotionally and cognitively. We noticed that the illustrations and stories we use in preaching are part of shaping a person's belief system.

We finished the session by engaging with 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and thinking about how the passage seeks to promote certain beliefs. One of the key off-the-cuff

moments happened during this final part of the session as I got them to draw a picture of what they thought Paul's goal was in 1 Corinthians 6 and how he went about achieving the goal. We noticed that at the point of preaching, it is the conceptual building blocks of the argument rather than the details of syntax that move us to take on new beliefs or be encouraged in the beliefs that we hold. Many students found that seeking to draw the relationships between ideas in the passage and the aim of the passage was extremely helpful. Several students shared with me in subsequent weeks that had started trying to draw passages as a way of engaging conceptually with God's truth.

Session 5

The aim of Session 5 was to show students that affections are crucial for belief and behavior change and to develop some tools that would help them to engage Scripture as affectionate readers leading to preaching that encouraged faithful Christian affections in response to the goodness of God's truth.

Session 5 covered material related to the place of affections, and particularly the importance placed on affections in the New Testament (e.g., Matt 22:37-39). We looked at Colossians 3 and asked about whether we were being called to behaviors, beliefs, or affections. Students noted that there was a complex interplay between all of these. We then moved on to examine some neuroscientific research and the implication that decisions cannot be made free of affections. One student raised issues about how this relates to bias (he had done a lot of bias training in his professional life before seminary). Other students noted that our Christian culture often assumes our emotions will lead us astray but that sometimes our hunches and emotions lead us to knowing what we should protect or what is important in relationship. This was a particularly simulating conversation.

We moved to talking about what stance we should take towards the text and what it means to be an "affectionate reader and explainer of the text." We looked at the

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model of Functional Imagery Training and talked about the need for concrete, sensory laden imagery when engaging with truth and promoting change.

We finished the session with a practical task. Students engaged with the rock metaphor used to describe God in Psalm 118 and its function in the context of the Psalm. Each student then spent time writing a sensory laden, emotionally aware illustration that involved being protected by a rock and relating that to our experience of God's love and care. Three students read their illustration out for the class and they were uniformly excellent. This was a particularly moving and encouraging time.

I finished by noting that sermons cannot maintain this level of emotional intensity from beginning to end, but that there is an art in learning when and how to engage your hearers deeply in the emotions of the text in a way that makes the ideas in the text intelligible and desirable.

Session 6

The aim of Session 6 was to encourage students to brainstorm many possible applications and to test them against Scripture by asking whether their applications would be recognized as valid by the original author of the text.

The main theme of session 6 was where to situate yourself and your audience in relation to the original speaker and audience for the text. We talked at length about the fact that 1 Thessalonians 1 was written as an encouragement and assurance to those who were suffering that their faith was genuine but that not everyone in every congregation would be in the same place. We asked the question: how might this affect our preaching? Students talked about the need to respect the nature of the original text and be aware of their current audience. We also talked about the importance of application that was in line with what the original author said but not necessarily identical to it. This made some students uncomfortable and we were careful to say that while the preacher has a responsibility to think about how the truths from the original text impact us and our

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context, this is not a license to say whatever we like.

I shared my notes from a sermon on 2 Corinthians 11:1-15 preached earlier in 2022 where I brainstormed possible relationships between what Paul was saying to the Corinthians and things that we should learn as 21st century believers. In talking about this, students noted that what we were doing was not simply syntactical work, and that it was hard work thinking through possibilities and options. We talked about the fact that it was possible to preach more than one sermon from a given passage and that thus saying "every passage has one big idea" is slightly disingenuous. We also talked about the importance of pointing people towards Jesus and how this fitted with engaging with the text in context and the current hearers.

Session 7

The aim of Session 7 was to give the students awareness of the importance of placing themselves under Scripture as they prepare to preach and to provide some tools to facilitate this process.

Session 7 moved us into the final section of the course, thinking particularly about the place of the preacher in preaching. One big idea that arose was that we tend to think of exegesis as a process that if followed creates the "right answer." This brings a sense of mastery of the text which is unhelpful for those who want to submit to the text. The most engaging and important discussion in this session was about how student's felt that different elements of their preaching preparation process distanced them from faithful obedience and which helped them to grow in submission to God's truth.

This generated perhaps the most emotional discussion during our time together. One student reported on their group conversation:

> We started by saying do syntax and translate but over the course of 15 minutes of discussing that kept getting moved later in the process. Before that there's meditation, reading and thinking on it, discussing it, questioning the text and being questioned. All of these things that get us into the text itself. I found that discussion really fascinating because where I get most stuck on my sermons is when I launch into the ground up and I could go in 50 different directions. But as we chatted we

saw the most helpful things in our preparation are when we're not under pressure to say this text says this exact thing but how am I receiving this text as I meditate, think, discuss.

This report led to another student explaining that they were "extremely uncomfortable" in response to this. He shared his own background growing up in church and being taught the Bible but never being shown how to read it and how his life was transformed by encountering systematic exposition when he got involved in a Christian group during his university years. He was concerned that they were saying that detailed work in the text was unhealthy, whereas he thought it was vital. Different students in the room engaged at depth around this and all agreed that detailed exegetical work was crucial but that their preparation process also required moments when they stood back from the text and thought about themselves and their world and their own response and the big picture.

We talked about the importance of developing a process that uses different modes of engagement to help us to think through different lenses about what the passage is saying and about how that shapes us as preachers. We finished by engaging with John Piper's article on praying through the text of Scripture. Students found this particularly helpful and several of them commented on the fact that they would like to include this as a regular practice.

Session 8

The aim of this session was to help students recap and engage with the course material by discussing the implications of the metaphors they used when trying to describe the nature of the preaching task.

The final session engaged with the question of what metaphor students would use to describe the preaching task. We talked about Abraham Kuruvilla's idea of preaching as the act of being a docent in an art gallery and about his picture of evangelical preaching as preachers putting the passage in a mincing machine and

preaching the "pulverized, propositional product" of the mincing process.

This generated discussion in two significant areas. (1) To what extent is preaching a different form of communication to letter writing and therefore needs to be aware of the change in form? And (2) is it then possible to put into the grinder not just the content of the passage but also the tone, form, imagery etc. of the passage in a way that the final form of the sermon engages with all of these things but in a way that does not mean that a sermon on the Psalms needs to be a Psalm? This led us back into a discussion of the nature of the authority of the text and the preacher. Particularly about whether the docent image evacuates preaching of a sense of the authority of God and leads towards reader response. The conversation was stimulating and led students to think about their role in preaching and the nature of the preaching process.

The session concluded with a short question time and a final 20 minutes for filling out the post survey. I finished with an exhortation to students to think about the elements of their preaching preparation process and how these would shape their preaching. Did their preparation process engage them in the text and result in preaching that made life under the Lordship of Jesus intelligible and desirable?

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The aim of the final chapter is to analyze the outcomes of the project described in chapter 4 against the goals set at beginning of the process. This chapter will show that the aims and goals of the project were met. It will then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the project leading to reflections on what I would have done differently. This is particularly pertinent given that MTC would like me to develop the material into a final year elective subject. The chapter concludes with some theological and personal reflections.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The project's purpose was to equip students from Moore Theological College with the understanding and skills required to develop biblically faithful, relevant application in their preaching. Whether the project achieved its purpose can be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Qualitatively, students were asked to respond to two questions at the end of the course: (1) In your own words, write down the most significant thing(s) you've learned about application as a result of participating in the Application in Preaching Course, and (2) What new habit or habits are you hoping to develop as a result of participating in the Application in Preaching Course?

The responses to both questions were encouraging. In terms of learning, students commonly referenced the importance of helping their hearers to see the intelligibility and desirability of living under Christ's Lordship and realizing that this meant speaking to the behaviors, beliefs, and affections of those listening. Many students

also spoke about the transformative nature of seeing application as part of the meaning of the text. Three quotes from students effectively summarize key areas of learning for the cohort:

> I have learnt that application is not an addon at the end of the sermon that tries and makes the sermon relevant, rather application is a part of the meaning of the text. I have learned that our role as preacher is to use scripture as a tool for rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness etc., and that the role of the preacher is to make God's Word and living the way God wants us to both intelligible and desirable. I have learnt that to help people apply the passage to their lives, they need to have their affections moved, and they need to have their beliefs and behaviours (sic) challenged and then practiced in their day to day life. (Participant 4045)

> Application is not a result of good exegesis and extracting the meaning and principles. Rather, the text itself is an application. As preacher, I am responsible for appealing to the audience through engaging with the mind and will and affections, in order to make living God's way desirable and intelligible. The meaning of the text drives application. The meaning of the text drives application, rather than extracting principles that then drive application. (Participant 5075)

> If my audience doesn't walk away from my sermon with an idea of how they will apply it, they haven't understood the passage . . . the process involves far more conscious reflection than I have been giving it. Not just an application "brainstorm" is required but interacting with how God is, in this text, shaping my affections, my convictions, and my behaviours (sic), and how my audience can be/should be shaped. (Participant 5464)

As can be seen, the course participants were convicted of the importance of application as essential to the preaching task. Furthermore, they were convinced that faithful application grows out of a deep understanding of what God is communicating in the text of Scripture. In turn, students identified some key areas in which they wished to change or develop their own preparation process.

The habit that students most identified as deserving development was the investment of time in preparation for personal reflection by the preacher on their own life in light of what the text of Scripture was saying. This was followed by specific practices to observe the emotional elements of communication and not just the logical elements in the passage being preached. Two quotes from students serve to capture the sentiment:

> Quiet, deliberate, and prayerful reflection on the passage alongside detailed exegesis. Reflection on emotion used by the passage and emotions evoked. (Participate 3536)

Praying through Scripture as I prepare to preach it. Ask for specific feedback about the application in sermons I give. Start prep for sermons earlier as I can spend more time meditating on it and applying it to myself. (Participant 3115)

In sum, the qualitative feedback from students showed significant growth in their understanding of the nature of application. Students also identified key areas of behavior that they wished to change to act on this information in ways that will change their preaching.

The qualitative feedback was mirrored in the quantitative feedback received from the pre and post student surveys. The quantitative feedback showed that students made changes in several areas because of the course. The first involved the percentage of preparation time dedicated to the development of application and the percentage of time given over to application in sermon delivery. The pre and post percentages reported by students are presented in Tables 1 and 2.[1]

Table 1. Comparison of percentage of preparation time used for
developing application from pre and post surveys

Participant	Pre	Post
3522	11.8%	23.1%
5356	10.0%	10.0%
5308	14.3%	50.0%
5342	16.0%	11.5%
5464	5.0%	30.0%
3700	20.0%	10.0%
3115	60.0%	50.0%
5713	8.0%	28.0%
7986	2.5%	16.7%
4045	9.4%	11.1%
4075	13.6%	50.0%
7929	5.0%	25.0%
3283	25.0%	20.0%

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[1] Whether a t-test on percentage data is valid is a debated question. For this reason, appendix 5 contains t-tests of the raw data in terms of time spent in developing application in preparation and engaging with application in the sermon. The significance of the results is discussed in the appendix.

Participant	Pre	Post
4755	18.2%	15.0%
7835	12.5%	33.3%

Table 2. Comparison of percentage of time in sermon dedicated to
application from pre and post surveys

Participant	Pre	Post
3522	21.4%	36.4%
5356	23.8%	23.8%
5308	27.3%	40.9%
5342	20.0%	28.6%
5464	16.7%	33.3%
3700	40.0%	26.7%
3115	50.0%	50.0%
5713	26.8%	33.3%
7986	12.5%	25.0%
4045	12.5%	24.1%
4075	14.3%	40.9%
7929	20.8%	40.0%
3283	29.6%	20.0%
4755	27.3%	22.7%
7835	40.0%	37.0%

The mean percentage of time in preparation used for the development of application in the most recent sermon preached before the course commenced was 15.4 percent. This compared to the mean percentage of time in preparation used for the development of application in the most recent sermon preached before the final survey of 25.6 percent.[2] A dependent t-test for the sample ($t = -2.492, p = .026<0.05$) indicates that

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[2] All students were asked to ensure they preached a sermon after the commencement of the course, and anecdotally, many students' most recent sermon was close to the end of the course. However, one limitation discovered in hindsight was the lack of a requirement for students to record the date of the most recent sermon at the time of filling in the final survey. Thus, it is impossible to know with accuracy how much of the course had been completed before the sermon being reported on in the final survey was preached.

the change is statistically significant.[3] Likewise, the percentage of time dedicated to application in the sermon rose from 25.5 percent in the most recent sermon preached before the course to 32.2 percent for the most recent sermon preached before the final survey. The dependent t-test for the sample ($t = -2.269, p = .040<0.05$) again indicates statistical significance.

It is possible to conclude that the course had a statistically significant impact on the students' use of time dedicated to application in both preparation and delivery, at least in the short term. It is difficult to know how much a one-off measurement like this represents a momentary response to the course material or the establishment of new patterns. Encouragingly, the surveys also showed a change in students' self-reporting of habits related to application. The pre and post responses to item 11 on the survey: "I regularly engage in habits built into my preaching process that help me to develop application when I preach" showed an increase from 3.33 in the pre surveys to 4.13 in the post surveys. A dependent t-test suggests that this change is significant ($t = -2.256, p = 0.041<0.05$).

The final major impact in student behavior was shown in the survey results for item 17: "I am good at engaging the hearer's affections." The pre course mean of 3.53 rose to a post course mean of 4.07 ($t = -3.228, p = 0.006<0.05$). This corresponds with the self-reported qualitative feedback where many students indicated that they had learned about the importance and value of engaging emotions as part of healthy application.

Overall, there are strong indications that the course had an impact on the students understanding of application in preaching and the development of skills and habits that will result in faithful, relevant application.

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[3] Appendix 5 shows the t-test for time spent developing application in sermon preparation performed on raw time. The p-value from this test was .078. The variance between the percentage t-test and the raw data t-test suggests that this result should be viewed with some caution.

<center>**Evaluation of the Project's Goals**</center>

The project aimed to achieve its purpose by meeting three goals, each of which will be discussed below.

Evaluation of Goal 1

The first goal was to recruit a minimum of 10 final-year students at Moore College to participate in the training program. This goal was met when fifteen students completed the Information and Invitation to Participate form. As mentioned in chapter 4, seventeen students expressed initial interest at the start of 2022, but only fifteen completed the form and commenced the course. Pleasingly, all fifteen of the students who began the course completed the course.

Evaluation of Goal 2

The second goal was to develop the curriculum for an 8-week training program in biblically faithful, relevant application. As discussed in chapter 4, this goal was met when an expert panel indicated that the material prepared met a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria at a level of sufficient or exemplary. A summary of the Expert Panel's feedback is found in table 3.

As can be seen from the table, 100 percent of the responses from the Expert Panel rated the curriculum as sufficient or exceeds. Thus, the criteria for goal 2 were met. As discussed in chapter 4, several helpful insights were gained from the expert panel feedback. In particular, issues were raised that relate to the development of the course into a final year subject for the degree program at MTC.

Table 3. Summary of Expert Panel responses to the Curriculum Evaluation Tool

Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Accuracy					
Each lesson was sound in its interpretation of Scripture.			1	2	
Each lesson was faithful to the theology of the Bible.			2	1	
Scope					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.			1	2	
The curriculum sufficiently covers a biblical pedagogical methodology.[4]			1	1	
Pedagogy					
Each lesson was clear, containing a big idea.			2	1	
Each lesson provides opportunities for participant interaction with the material.			1	2	
Practicality					
The curriculum clearly details how to develop biblically faithful, relevant application in preaching.			2	1	
At the end of the course, participants will be able to better able to apply the Scriptures in preaching.			1	2	

Evaluation of Goal 3

The third goal was to implement the training program and equip the students to develop biblically faithful, relevant application. This goal was measured by administering

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[4] Two of the expert panel expressed some confusion as to the meaning of this criteria, Dr Jensen chose not to give any response to this question, thus the summary shows only two responses.

pre and post surveys which were used to evaluate the change in knowledge of key skills involved in developing application and in the time spent developing application as part of the sermon preparation process.

This goal was considered to be met by an analysis of the pre and post survey results. The time spent in application development as part of the sermon preparation process has been discussed above in the evaluation of the purpose of the project. However, one more result deserves attention. Items 7 to 24 were related to knowledge and skills involved in application. These were all rated according to a 6-point Likert Scale. The results from the pre and post surveys showed a statistically significant change in the summed results of these scales from a mean of 71.36 in the pre survey to a post survey mean of 75.93 ($t = -2.613, p = 0.020<0.05$).[5]

Given that students changed the percentage of their preparation time dedicated to developing application and that their self-reported levels of knowledge and skill showed a statistically significant change between the pre and post surveys as measured by a dependent t-test, it is possible to conclude that goal 3 was successfully met.

Table 4. Comparison of summed Likert scale survey
responses between pre and post surveys

Participant	Pre	Post
3522	63.5[6]	72
5356	60	77
5308	80	81
5342	77	70

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[5] One item in the survey displayed a statistically significant movement downwards rather than upwards. Item 16, "I believe that the Holy Spirit applies the Bible to the hearer when I preach," moved from a pre survey mean of 5.93 to post survey mean of 5.26 ($t = 2.1972, p = 0.045<0.05$). For this reason, item 16 is excluded from the summed results discussed here. The change in this item is most probably related to the fact that we discussed at some length in one class the idea that the preacher is responsible for application and that rather than applying Scripture, the Holy Spirit brings conviction.

[6] In spite of the instructions and Likert scale, one participant circled directly between 3 and 4 on their response to one question. I have recorded this as 3.5 which gives rise to the unusual number here.

Participant	Pre	Post
5464	62	73
3700	75	75
3115	70	79
5713	79	76
7986	71	84
4045	68	73
4075	74	82
7929	71	76
3283	76	73
4755	81	79
7835	63	69

Strengths of the Project

Perhaps the greatest strength of the project was the impact it had on students. At the end of the course one student declared that this had been the most valuable thing that he had done in his final year of study and several other students agreed. Another student told me that the course had changed his view of preaching. He decided that he needed to change his preparation process in response to the course to invest more time in thinking through the impacts of the text for himself and his hearers.

I think that the course achieved this kind of response because it helped students to identify their theological presuppositions and to question them in light of a theological reframing of the preaching task. As shown in the qualitative feedback, the idea that application is an element of the meaning of the text, and not and addition to it, has spurred students to see that reflection, meditation, and an awareness of their audience are crucial parts of the preaching process. Furthermore, students have been led to see the importance of addressing the relationship between ideas, affections, and the practical outworking of the truth. This does not result in a simple, three step method for developing application, but does result in asking wise questions and engaging in thoughtful reflection. The idea that preaching should make life under the Lordship of Jesus desirable and intelligible and call hearers to changed living has given students a

clear way of articulating the goal of their preaching and to think about how their own habits in preparation can lead towards or away from that goal.

The final strength of the project was the level of engagement and interaction amongst the students. They interacted in very deep and vulnerable ways throughout the course, questioning each other's presuppositions, challenging each other to change their minds, and being able to laugh at each other's strengths and weaknesses. The students who participated were very keen to delve into the topic of application in preaching and displayed a humility and desire for growth and change. Their responses are a great encouragement from God about his work in their lives and the hope for faithful biblical preaching in Sydney and hopefully beyond.

Weaknesses of the Project

The main weaknesses of the project relate to the length of the course and the limitations posed by the students' other responsibilities. Because the project ran with final year students in their final semester at college, I was keen to limit the time required to the hour and a half that we met each week.[7] This was largely because students at this stage in their study are involved in seeking employment after college, as well as finishing final year major projects. This meant that they did not have time to do extra work outside of the classroom.

This resulted in two weaknesses. First, it meant that students did not do much reading about application in preaching. It would have benefitted participants to do more reading for themselves and thus engage more deeply with some of the ideas presented in class. It would also have been helpful to have a full semester of classes (usually twelve weeks in my context) which would have given us more space to examine the importance

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[7] The project ran with final year students at the request of the Principal of the college. In hindsight, this was beneficial as it allowed depth in engagement because of the students' prior learning but it also meant that the course was running in a stressful season for the students.

of the development of habits. Dr. Hohne's course feedback raised the importance of coaching students to see the significance of habit and do the work necessary to help them identify and begin to practice new habits. While students gave some evidence of this taking place in their qualitative feedback, this was an area of the course that could have been greatly strengthened.

Second, the time constraints meant that there were no assessments or assignments. Given that application is essential to the development of knowledge, this is a glaring omission. The danger of the course as it stands is that we sit in class and talk about preaching but change nothing about the way that we do it. I think that this was partially ameliorated by the students' commitment to the importance of what they were learning, but it would have been good to have students write sermons and deliver them to each other as a way of putting into practice what they were learning in the course.

The other area of weakness for the project was the timing of the final survey and the subjective nature of the responses. It would have strengthened the project to get external listeners responding to and rating the students' application in preaching before and after the course. This was originally planned but abandoned in discussion with my supervisor due to the complexity of implementation and the time restrictions. Because the application course finished as the final assignments for courses and exams came due, if students were required to preach in their church, get feedback from three congregation members and return it all anonymously for analysis, it probably would have taken two months longer to finalize the project. This would have made it impossible to meet the deadlines for the DMin.

Finally, given that a key outcome of the project is long term change in habits for preachers in their preparation process, it would have been useful to survey student behavior in their preparation process several times over the months following their participation in the course to see if changes in habits were sustained. Again, the time limitations of the DMin made this impossible.

What I Would Do Differently

Considering the previous discussion, if I had my time again, I would extend the course from eight weeks to ten weeks. I would use one of the extra weeks to consider the nature of habit formation, and to encourage the students to think more concretely about new habits that they wanted to involve in their preaching preparation. If this happened halfway through the course, we could have revisited that work in small groups in the final week as a way of being accountable about changes they were making in their preparation process. I would have used the other extra week towards the end of the course to get students in small groups to preach a short sermon to each other and then explain how the sermon had been affected by what they were learning. I would have had the students give feedback to each other both on their sermon and their application of the material from the course.

Theological Reflections

There were three big theological breakthroughs for me in the process of my DMin study and the development of the project.

First, I came to appreciate the deep relationship between application and meaning in a way that I had not previously. I have long assumed that application is a step undertaken after ascertaining the meaning of the text. But the project forced me to consider more deeply the implications of the dual authorship of Scripture, and in particular God as the author of Scripture. If God's intention is to speak through his Word not just to the original hearers but to those who listen to his Word in every age, and through that Word to transform people into his image, then application is not ancillary to meaning, but essential to it. The process of understanding and teaching a passage of Scripture is not complete until the implications of the text for living life at this moment under the Lordship of Jesus have been engaged with. Thus, application is an essential part of the meaning of the text and vital to faithful preaching. The correlation is that time committed to thinking about application is not time taken away from the "main game."

Second, the preacher is responsible for application. I have often previously spoken about the Spirit applying Scripture to the hearts of the hearers. While I still believe that an important truth is guarded by such language, I have become convinced that the belief that the Spirit applies the passage has stopped many evangelical preachers from seeing their God given responsibility with regards to application. As a result of my study, I now find it strange that we invest so much energy in training people to do accurate exegesis without ever believing that this practice could usurp God's authority, while at the same time being deeply suspicious of effort invested in developing application, as if such a task quenches the work of God's Spirit. Particularly, my study of 2 Timothy 3 and 4 has led me to a change of heart. I believe that Scripture clearly teaches that the preacher is responsible to correct, teach, rebuke, challenge, and admonish by using the Scriptures for the task that God has made them useful for. The preacher's job is not to preach his exegesis of the text and then pray for the Spirit to do the applying, but to apply the text as faithfully as he can because he is responsible as a shepherd, and to pray for the Spirit to bring conviction.[8]

Third, I have been struck by a growing awareness of the importance of good works for the Christian life. My reformed evangelical heritage has made me suspicious of good works, but the Bible speaks in a consistently positive way about their value. The project has led me to see that the whole of Scripture is designed to lead God's people to know how to live under the Lordship of Christ and it does this by teaching us the behaviors, beliefs, and affections that are appropriate for those who are saved by Jesus Christ. These behaviors, beliefs, and affections are not totally independent categories, but are deeply inter-related because they are shaped by the character and nature of God revealed in the gospel and reflected in the created order. The preacher's task in

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[8] I would hasten to add that prayers for the Spirit to make up for the preacher's lack are still entirely necessary! It's just that they should not be used as an excuse to avoid responsibility.

expounding Scripture is to see how these different aspects are woven into God's communication to us in the Bible and then invite their hearers to be shaped by the inter-relationship of behavior, belief, and affections in such a way that they are, by the work of the Spirit, transformed into Christ's likeness. Faithful preaching must be constantly aware of and engaged with all three of these aspects.

Personal Reflections

I began the DMin because of my role as the Dean of Students at MTC. During the three or so years of my study, I have been unable to travel to the U.S. because of the restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and have had to do the whole course remotely (participating in intensives through Zoom, a somewhat nocturnal experience given that I live in Australia). I was not aware at the start of the process how much time and effort would be required, or the complexity that would be involved. In hindsight, I am thankful that God kept those things from me, for had I known them I am not sure I would have started! However, in God's generosity, the time spent reading and thinking about application in preaching has had an enormous impact on me. It has shaped the first-year preaching course that I teach in innumerable ways, and God willing, it will result in a new final year elective in application for future Moore College students.

In that process, I have been personally stretched in ways that I would never have been without the discipline of having to complete the reading and assignments set for my intensives and the pursuit of the project. I am extremely thankful to God for the way that the study has shaped my own preaching, leading to a deeper and more thoughtful engagement with application, and in my teaching at MTC. God's promise to work through hardship and difficulty has been fulfilled in his kindness to me in all that I have learned and applied as a result of undertaking the study. I believe that I'm a better preacher as a result, but more importantly, that I'm a more thoughtful and theologically informed teacher of preaching.

Conclusion

God has used the past three years to grow me and reshape my understanding of what is involved in the preaching task. It is more complex and rich than I had ever given it credit for, and is in many ways beyond the capacity of any person. The words of the apostle Paul have grown in their reality: "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor 2:16). However, in God's wisdom and kindness, he has also revealed the wonder and privilege of preaching the whole counsel of God, with an eye on the goal that he himself has, the transformation of his people into the likeness of Christ for his own glory. I pray that the study will continue to spur me on in pursuit of God's goal, especially as I train others in the task of preaching.

APPENDIX 1

INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

This instrument was used as a means to inform potential participants of the commitments involved in participating in the training program and to gain a formal commitment to attend all sessions of the program. All participants signed the agreement.

<div align="center">INFORMATION AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A TRAINING
PROGRAM ON APPLICATION IN PREACHING</div>

Dear Prospective Candidate
Please consider this a formal invitation to participate in a training program aimed at developing your abilities in developing application in preaching. Please take time to review the objectives of the training program and the expectations of your participation. If you wish to participate and are willing to commit yourself to meeting the expectations, then please sign at the bottom and respond to the short-answer question over the page in your own words. Return the completed application to me.

I look forward to our time together.

Paul Grimmond

Training Course Objectives
To equip you with the understanding and skills to develop biblically faithful, relevant application in preaching.

Training Course Expectations
1. The training program will occur over 8 weeks, 3:00-4:30pm Tuesday on the following dates: Jul 26, Aug 2, 9, 23, 30, Sept 13, 20, 27. You will be expected to attend all of the sessions or to communicate your inability to attend prior to the classes in cases of medical or personal circumstances that make attendance impossible.
2. You will be required to fill out a survey prior to commencing the program and at the completion of the program.

SIGNED BY_____DATE_____

I would define application in preaching as (I am not looking for right or wrong answers but for your honest answer about how you think about application in preaching at this moment):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 2

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

This instrument was used as a means to evaluate the curriculum for the training course.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Accuracy					
Each lesson was sound in its interpretation of Scripture.					
Each lesson was faithful to the theology of the Bible.					
Scope					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.					
The curriculum sufficiently covers a biblical pedagogical methodology.					
Pedagogy					
Each lesson was clear, containing a big idea.					
Each lesson provides opportunities for participant interaction with the material.					
Practicality					
The curriculum clearly details how to develop biblically faithful, relevant application in preaching.					
At the end of the course, participants will be able to better able to apply the Scriptures in preaching.					

Other Comments:

APPENDIX 3

BIBLICAL APPLICATION KNOWLEDGE
AND SKILLS SURVEY

The following instrument was used as a means to evaluate the participant's knowledge and skills in biblical application. The survey was administered to the participants both prior to commencing the training program and after the completion of the program.

APPLICATION IN PREACHING SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify your current understanding and skills in developing biblically faithful, relevant application in preaching. This research is being conducted by Paul Grimmond for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. *Participation is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.* By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Directions: Please answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer or in the case of questions asking about time, place your answer in the space provided.

Part 1

1. What is your age in years?

    ___A. 18-24
    ___B. 25-34
    ___C. 35-44
    ___D. 45-54
    ___E. 55-64
    ___F. 65 and over

2. How many sermons have you preached in your life?

    ___A. 10 or less
    ___B. 11 to 20
    ___C. 21 to 30
    ___D. 31 to 40
    ___E. more than 40

3. For the most recent sermon you prepared, approximately how many hours did you spend preparing (to the nearest half hour)?

    _____

4.　For the most recent sermon you prepared, approximately how many hours did you spend explicitly developing application (to the nearest half hour)?

_____

5.　For the most recent sermon you prepared, approximately how long did it take to preach (mins)?

_____

6.　For the most recent sermon you prepared, approximately how many minutes of the delivery time were devoted to application?

_____

<u>Directions:</u> Please answer the following questions: (1) Place a check by the multiple-choice questions. (2) Some questions ask you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

Part 2

7. I consider myself to be competent at biblical application in preaching	SD D DS AS A SA
8. I find it easy to develop biblically faithful application in my preaching	SD D DS AS A SA
9. I find it easy to develop relevant application in my preaching	SD D DS AS A SA
10. I regularly apply the passage to myself before I apply it to my hearers	SD D DS AS A SA
11. I regularly engage in habits built into my preaching preparation process that help me to develop application when I preach	SD D DS AS A SA
12. I pray regularly for myself during the sermon preparation process	SD D DS AS A SA
13. I pray regularly for those who will hear the sermon during the sermon preparation process	SD D DS AS A SA
14. I am able to explain how the application in my sermons relates to the exegesis of the passage I am preaching	SD D DS AS A SA
15. I believe that I am responsible for applying the Bible to my hearers when I preach	SD D DS AS A SA
16. I believe that the Holy Spirit applies the Bible to the hearer when I preach	SD D DS AS A SA

17. I am good at engaging the hearer's affections when I preach   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

18. I regularly engage the hearer's affections when I preach   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

19. I am good at engaging the hearer's beliefs when I preach   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

20. I regularly engage the hearer's beliefs when I preach   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

21. I am good at encouraging the hearer to think about godly living when I preach   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

22. I regularly encourage the hearer to think about godly living when I preach   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

23. I can explain how theological reflection is related to the process of exegesis   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

24. I can explain how theological reflection aids in developing application in preaching   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

25. I read my Bible apart from sermon preparation (check only one)

        ____A. more than once per day
        ____B. once per day
        ____C. several times per week
        ____D. once per week
        ____E. several times per month
        ____F. once per month
        ____G. several times per year
        ____H. not at all

26. I meditate on Scripture (check only one)

   ____A. more than once per day
   ____B. once per day
   ____C. several times per week
   ____D. once per week
   ____E. several times per month
   ____F. once per month
   ____G. several times per year
   ____H. not at all

27. I pray (check only one)

   ___A. more than once per day
   ___B. once per day
   ___C. several times per week
   ____D. once per week
   ____E. several times per month
   ____F. once per month
   ____G. several times per year
   ____H. not at all

28. I have a specific time set aside for prayer.

   ____A. Yes
   ___B. No

The following 2 questions should only be answered when completing the survey for the second time (i.e., when completing the survey after having completed the Application in Preaching Course)

29. In your own words, write down the most significant you've learned about application as a result of participating in the Application in Preaching Course.

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30. What new habit or habits are you hoping to develop as a result of participating in the Application in Preaching Course?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Personal Identification Number: _____

APPENDIX 4

COURSE NOTES FOR THE APPLICATION TRAINING
COURSE

This appendix contains the material distributed to the students during the

implementation of the application training course. The material was distributed via

Microsoft Teams.

The Application Course

Introduction

The following course is designed to help theological students being trained in a reformed, evangelical, Protestant tradition to improve how they develop faithful, relevant application from the Bible in the expositional sermons that they preach.

The course is built on three key ideas:

1) The goal of the Preacher is the goal of God in Scripture, to see lives transformed so that people love God and serve him with their whole hearts.

2) The key to understanding how to do this is to see that the Bible shapes people by shaping behaviour, beliefs, and affections. Thoughtful reflection on how the Bible does this and a desire to seek this as an outcome of preaching is vital to developing faithful, relevant application.

3) Preachers will get better at applying the Bible by introducing habits into their preaching preparation process that engage them in the process of understanding the text and living it out.

Overview

In order to develop healthy habits in the preaching preparation process that involve the preacher in specific reflection on application, the course moves in three parts.

Part I – (Weeks 1-2)

The first part of the course invites the student to think about their own culture of preaching and its strengths and weaknesses and to lay a foundation for seeing that the preacher does what God does in Scripture – they apply God's truth to their own lives and the lives of their hearers.

PART II – (Weeks 3-6)

The middle section of the course explores the idea that God's goal in Scripture is to form behaviours, beliefs, and affections. It seeks to show that the Bible wants us to act in certain ways that are made intelligible and desirable by the belief system in which those behaviours are set in order to shape the Christian's affections. The ultimate goal of Scripture is to teach God's people to love what God loves and to hate what God hates that we might live lives pleasing

to our heavenly Father. By paying attention to the behaviours, beliefs, and affections encouraged by Scripture, the preacher will better situated to develop faithful, relevant application.

PART III – (Weeks 7-8)

The final part of the course invites the student to become more self-aware of their own part in the process of preaching with application as the goal. In particular, it invites them to develop new habits in their own preaching preparation process that will help them to reflect on, pray about, and personally engage with the changes that they long to see in their hearers for God's glory.

Reading along the way

- The bibliography suggests a number of books that might be helpful if you want to pursue the ideas presented in the course further.
- If you were to read two books alongside the course, I would recommend:
  - Dryden, J. de Waal. *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom: Recovering the Formative Agency of Scripture*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2018.
  - Clear, James. *Atomic Habits: Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones*. New York: Avery, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2018.

Week 1: What is application and why do we avoid it?

    a) Welcome and initial survey

See extra handout with survey

    b) Our reformed evangelical context: Some arguments against application

The following are excerpts from an article about application in preaching published in *The Briefing* a number of years ago. In small groups, read the excerpts and answer the following questions:

- How are understanding and application characterized?

- What is the preacher's role and what is God's role in preaching?

- What do you agree with? What do you disagree with?

http://thebriefing.com.au/2012/07/the-dilemma-of-preaching/ (Roman numerals added for ease reference, these are not in the original)

(i) "Now, before I get to my dilemma, I'll need to fill you in on the background. The other week, I spent minimal time in the early stages of sermon preparation (translating and understanding the text) which is a very big shortcut I take only very rarely. I had to fast-track the preparation cycle because I was running a three-day conference midweek while living in what I call 'crazy baby land'—the world of sleep deprivation that comes with the joy of having a newborn. So I pretty much compressed my usual sermon preparation cycle from four or five days into two days.

What was the outcome for the sermon on Sunday? People loved it. According to the feedback on the comment cards, and through personal conversations, the sermon was simple, clear, engaging, and had really good 'application'.

Now, I suspect the major factor was the grace of God. It was the right message for his people to hear at that moment in time. And yet, it could also be that the compressed sermon preparation time acted as a catalyst for clarity in my preaching. But something rankled within me; something wasn't sitting comfortably with my soul.

And so, as I reflected on this week, a dilemma formed in my mind. On the one hand, my biblical instincts drive me to do the hard yards of 'correctly handling the word of God' (2 Tim 4:15)—working hard on the text to deepen my own understanding and communicate that understanding. On the other hand, stories, illustrations, and application grounded in 'real life' seem to have the best return for my preaching investment. So much so, that there seems to be a gaping chasm between 'understanding' the text (large effort, little return) and 'applying' that same text (little effort, large return).

So what is the way forward? How can I preach the word without sacrificing the text upon the altar of 'application'? Alternatively, how do I preach the word without turning understanding the word into the dry arid wasteland of intellectualism?

There are also parallel questions for those hearing the sermon. How do we 'hear' a sermon, as opposed to merely being entertained by one? Why do we prefer the 'application' of the text, to the 'understanding' of the text? And why do we yearn for the 'take home' message?"

. . .

(ii) "Stepping into the arena of the preacher, my starting point is the false dichotomy between understanding the text and applying that text. Setting up understanding and application of a text as polar opposites is fundamentally flawed. Understanding Scripture, by its very nature, is, and always will be, applicable. That is, the end point of reading Scripture is not to know how to live our lives, but to know God. Therefore any time we read Scripture it will be applicable to us, because it will tell us about God."

. . .

(iii) "Certainly, there are those gifted preachers who can hold the audience in rapt attention for the whole sermon without a witty story, or even any illustrations, and it is precisely these preachers from whom we novices need to learn. For it is these preachers who lead the way in demolishing the unnatural enmity between understanding and applying the text. Sadly, there are few such preachers—and for each one of these there are a hundred 'razzle-dazzle' preachers. The razzle-dazzlers keep the audience in rapt attention with their slick storytelling, charisma, rhetorical sophistication, and every other trick in the preacher's playbook. Now, don't get me wrong, there is a place for charisma, rhetorical sophistication, and the like, so long as they are slaves to the word of God, not masters over it. For the test of a 'razzle-dazzler' is whether they reinforce a dichotomy between understanding the text and applying the text. For example, does the audience walk away with their take-home application point, without having any real grounding in the text itself (if there is one)? Or even worse, does the audience walk away having satiated their entertainment appetite, paying homage to their razzle-dazzler with platitudes like, 'they were so engaging', and 'that preacher is a gifted communicator'? If the answer is 'yes' then sadly, the iron curtain between applying and understanding the text has been reinforced."

. . .

(iv) "Digging even deeper, I think what lies at the heart of the matter is the difference between God's word-driven power and our profound selfishness. God's word-driven power changes preaching from merely a formal address, like any other business presentation, into a life-changing encounter with the living God. More specifically, God's word-driven power should drive preachers to clearly delineate between their own responsibility and God's. The preacher's responsibility is to be faithful to the text; transforming human hearts to see the word of God as it actually is (2 Thess 1) is God's prerogative. Not only so, but the preacher must themselves have an inherent trust that God will work, by his Spirit, through the word of God, to change lives. For without this trust in God, the preacher is susceptible to all sorts of error."

. . .

(v) "When it comes to the preaching of God's word, the shift from boring exegesis to interesting application typifies a shift from trusting in the word of God, to 'enhancing' it via our own sinful inventions. For example, one of the latest trends is 'contextualization'. This sounds like a strongly evangelical term. Who wouldn't want to put God's word into the language of the people, so that they can understand the great news of Jesus? And yet, what is actually meant is totally different."

c) What do we mean by application? (Direct (A1) and Indirect (A2))

Application: "An attempt by the preacher the bring the truths, argument, imagery, and function of the text, rightly understood in their biblical context, to bear on the behaviours, beliefs, and affections of the hearer with the goal of seeing them transformed into the likeness of the Lord Jesus."

Groups:
- What would you change about the definition?

Two "types" of application:

i)   Direct application

"First, there are what might be called 'clear' or 'obvious' applications. These are the beliefs and behaviors that follow from the direct commands of Scripture. For example, the command to love your neighbor may result in a number of different actions that someone would perform towards their neighbor in response to the command. The first use of application refers to the preaching of these belief and behavior implications (hereafter A1)." (From PG's thesis).

e.g., Flee sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:18). Be angry and do not sin (Eph 4:26). Do not lie to one another (Col 3:9).

ii)   Indirect Application

d) The role of Scripture, the Spirit, and the Preacher

   i)   The preacher is to do what the Scripture does

       Titus 2

       2 Tim 3:14-4:2

   ii)   Does the Spirit apply or convict?

e) Reflection questions

- Is the preacher active or passive in applying Scripture?

- What do you think it means to rely on the work of the Spirit in preaching? Especially with regards to application?

- What do you think it means that the goal of preaching is transformation?

- How might this change the way that you preach?

Select Bibliography for The Application Course

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Week 2: The purpose of God in Scripture: Transformation, application, and meaning

    a) The pressures that drive us away from application

        i) Western Intellectual Tradition: the dichotomies that shape us

Dryden talks of the set of "modernist bifurcations" that plague the present day reader of Scripture:

"being/doing, meaning/significance, critical/confessional, fact/value, head/heart, indicative/imperative, and history/theology."[1]

Esther Meek talks about our epistemological dichotomies:

" - Knowledge gets contrasted to belief.
- Knowledge is identified with *facts*; facts stand over against *opinions* and *interpretation*, as well as against *values* and *morals*.
- Knowledge and facts are identified with *reason*; reason is opposed to faith, also to *emotion*.
- Knowledge, facts, and reason are identified with *theory*; theory, everyone thinks, is distinct from *application*, and distinct from *action*.
- Knowledge, facts, reason, and theory are epitomized by *science*; people oppose science to *art*, to *imagination*, and they oppose it to *religion*, and also to *authority*.
- Knowledge, facts, reason, theory, and science are *objective*; anything *subjective* should be set to the side, a contaminant to be minimized.
- Knowledge, facts, reason, theory, science, and the objective get aligned with *the neutral public sphere*; all outside of this isn't knowledge, and should be kept *private*. Public is what we can agree on and discuss; private is and should be different from person to person.
- Knowledge, facts, reason, theory, science, objectivity, and the neutral public sphere align with *mind*; mind is divorced from *body*. Also, mind is, when you get right down to it, divorced from the *world*, from *reality*.
- Knowledge, facts, reason, theory, science, objectivity, the neutral public sphere, and mind align with *the way things are (reality)*, to be distinguished from *the way things appear (appearance)*.

Let's add one more that I feel is frequently implicitly countenanced by both genders:

- Knowledge, facts, reason, theory, science, objectivity, the neutral public sphere, and mind are *male*; male is set over against *female*."[2]

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[1] J. de Waal Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom: Recovering the Formative Agency of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2018), xviii.

[2] Esther L. Meek, *Loving to Know: Introducing Covenant Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 8-9.

What do you think these authors mean by dichotomies or bifurcations?

Where do you experience these dichotomies or bifurcations in your world?

What impacts have these dichotomies/bifurcations had on our understanding of application?

ii) Law/Gospel

b) Evangelical Preaching and Application Culture

   i) The primacy of the gospel and the forgiveness response to demand

Dryden identifies in his book a typical strategy:

When a passage mentions a high calling to a changed life (e.g. Matt 5:17-48, Col 3:12-17, 2 Peter 1:3-15) preachers often follow a four step process:

(1) They notice the demand for a life shaped by Christian convictions;
(2) They note that nobody can possibly actually fulfil these demands;
(3) They explain that Jesus met the demands in our place so that we won't be condemned;
(4) They call on the hearer to believe in Jesus' imputed righteousness and to ask for forgiveness

- Why do we follow this pattern?

- What are we trying to protect? What important pastoral issues does this safeguard?

If this is the process that is constantly followed, what implications does this have for:

111

- The exploration of repentance?

- An exploration of putting on and putting off, temptation, habit etc.?

ii) Getting it right and getting it across – the culture created by our processes

Let's look at another example: We use this little phrase at college, and Cornhill etc. use it as well.

"Getting it right and Getting it across"

What is useful about this slogan?

What habits in our preparation does the slogan privilege?

What are the potential downsides from the emphasis found in the slogan?

c) Rehabilitating the relationship between meaning and application

i) John Frame

Frame speaks of the false distinction between meaning and application.

"Over and over, preachers (and others) try to proclaim the 'meaning' of the text and then its 'application'—the first is 'what it means,' the second 'what it means to us.' Sometimes we are told that we must understand 'what it means' before we can understand 'how it applies.' The meaning 'comes first,' the applications is 'based on' the meaning."[3]

"Knowing the meaning of a sentence is not merely being able to replace it with an equivalent sentence (e.g., replacing the Hebrew

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[3] John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, A Theology of Lordship (Phillipsburg, N.J: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co, 1987), 82

sentence with the English sentence 'Thou shalt not steal'). An animal could be trained to do that. Knowing the meaning is being able to use the sentence, to understand its implications, its powers, its applications. Imagine someone saying that he understands the meaning of a passage of Scripture but doesn't know at all how to apply it. Taking that claim literally would mean that he could answer no questions about the text, recommend no translations into other languages, draw no implications from it, or explain none of its terms in his own words. Could we seriously accept such a claim? When one lacks knowledge of how to 'apply' a text, his claim to know the 'meaning' becomes an empty—meaningless—claim. Knowing the meaning, then, is knowing how to apply. The meaning of Scripture is its application.[4]

What is Frame's problem with the common understanding of meaning and application?

Why would you say that application/significance/implication is part of meaning?

Have we understood the passage until we have understood its implications and significances for us?

ii) Knowing and Doing in Education theory

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT):

Learning involves a cycle of stages: Experiencing-Reflecting-Thinking-Acting.

James Zull:
"Sensory input could come from the outside world or from our own body, but once those signals have entered the ***sensory part of the cortex***, they flow first through the ***integrative part of the brain nearest the sensory part***, then through the ***integrative part nearest the motor brain***, and then to the ***motor brain itself***. Once action has been initiated, that action is

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[4] Frame, *Knowledge of God*, 66-67.

detected by the sensory brain, so the output of the brain becomes new sensory input."[5]

According to Zull: "the learning cycle arises naturally from the structure of the brain." (p. 19)

What are the implications of the learning cycle and the way our God created brains process information for our preaching and the place of application?

iii) The questions we need to ask

- What behaviours, beliefs, affections are encouraged in the modern reader by the text?

- Does the preacher's present application of the passage engage with the metaphors and relationships between key doctrines unfolded in the text?

- How does the preacher's application illuminate or enrich the present-day hearer's comprehension of the meaning of the text?

- Would the original author recognize this modern-day application of this passage as valid? Why or Why Not?

d) What does this passage mean? (Eph 6:1-3)

Ephesians 6:1–3 (ESV) — **1** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* **2** *"Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise),* **3** *"that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."*

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[5] Zull, *The Art of Changing the Brain,* 16, (emphasis mine).

Week 3: Moving from the text to us: (Part I – Behaviour)

    a) The Story so Far:

    b) Where is the gap between Scripture and us?

Colossians 4:16 (ESV) — ¹⁶ *And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.*

In the first century, letters to churches were circulated and read in other churches. What did it mean to read a letter to another church if you were reading it as someone who wasn't in that church?

- How might you have conceived of the gap between you and the author?

- How might you have conceived of the gap between you and the intended audience?

What cultural/contextual tools do you use for reading all the time?

How might these help you to approach Scripture in a healthy way?

    c) Reading Scripture as apprenticeship in behaviour, belief, and affections

What is the aim of Scripture? What is God in Scripture trying to do?

The Bible tells us what the Christian life looks like:

Ephesians 4:17–5:2 (ESV) — ¹⁷ *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.* ¹⁸ *They are darkened in their understanding,*

alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!— ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

In this passage:
- What actions are commended or condemned?

- What affections are encouraged?

- How are the actions and affections connected to the character of God and Christ?

d) The importance of good works in the New Testament

What do people who have struggled with these vices need to grapple with when they come to Christ? How might they have viewed these vices as a non-Christian? How should they view them now?

Drunkenness?

Lust?
Anger?

e) Rehabilitating example

f) Virtue/Vice lists – classes of action, connected with Christ and the character of God, connected to belief and affections...

   Why is Colossians 3 so concrete? Why is the NT full of virtue and vice lists?

g) Conclusion

   What has struck you today?

   What do you want to think more about?

   What might it mean to take these ideas seriously? How might it change your preparation and preaching?

Week 4: Moving from the text to us: (Part II – Belief)

    a) Preaching to shape beliefs

       i.   Components of belief: knowledge – assent - trust

James 2:14–26 (ESV) — **14** *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?* **15** *If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,* **16** *and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?* **17** *So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.* **18** *But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.* **19** *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!* **20** *Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?* **21** *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?* **22** *You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;* **23** *and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God.* **24** *You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.* **25** *And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?* **26** *For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*

John Frame on the relationship between knowledge and obedience:

1) *Knowledge of God produces obedience* (John 17:26; 2 Peter 1:3¬ 5; 2:18-20).
2) *Obedience to God leads to knowledge* (John 7:17; Eph. 3:17-19; 2 Tim. 2:25f.; 1 John 3:16; cf. Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 15:33; Isa. 33:6)
3) *Obedience is knowledge, and knowledge is obedience.* (apposition {Hosea 6:6} or defining one another {Jer. 22:16}. Knowledge as a form of obedience (cf. Jer. 31:31ff.; John 8:55; 1

Cor. 2:6 [cf. vv. 13-15]; Eph. 4:13; Phil 3:8-11; 2 Thess. 1:8f.; 2 Peter 1:5;

4) *Thus obedience is the criterion of knowledge.* Denying God is seen in the corruption of one's life (PSS. 10:4ff.; 14:1-7; 53). Similarly, the test of Christian faith or knowledge is a holy life (Matte 7:21ff.; Luke 8:21; John 8:47; 14:15, 21, 23f.; 15:7, 10, 14; 17:6, 17; 1 John 2:35; 4:7; 5:2f.; 2 John 6f.; Rev. 12:17; '14:12).

5) *Therefore it is clear that knowledge itself must be sought in an obedient way.* 1 Corinthians 1-2; 3:18-23; 8:1-3; and James 3:13-18.

ii.   Belief and worldview

b) Exhorting people to belief

i.   Argument forms belief

Remember Martin Lloyd-Jones's famous quote:

"What is preaching? Logic on fire! Eloquent reason! Are these contradictions? Of course they are not. Reason concerning this Truth ought to be mightily eloquent, as you see it in the case of the Apostle Paul and others. It is theology on fire. And a theology which does not take fire, I maintain, is a defective theology; or at least the man's understanding of it is defective. Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire. A true understanding and experience of the Truth must lead to this. I say again that a man who can speak about these things dispassionately has no right whatsoever to be in a pulpit; and should never be allowed to enter one." (Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, p. 97)

ii.   Barriers to belief

Duane and Muriel Elmer – *The Learning Cycle*

"Fears about our own capabilities to change, fears about what others will think if we change, and, finally, fears about the costs of

change summarize the major barriers learners face when they choose to act on what they are learning." (Elmer, *The Leaning Cycle*, p. 112)

"Research in behavior change identifies three types of barriers: (1) personal—negative thoughts and beliefs about one's capacity to change (my fears), (2) social—negative pressures from significant others leading to no change (fears of others' reactions), and (3) cultural beliefs and practices—pressures from (fear of violating traditional) cultural norms and accepted wisdom that supports the status quo." (Elmer, *The Leaning Cycle*, p. 112)

Reasoned Action Approach to behaviour change

1. The anticipated behavior change will be beneficial (behavioral belief).
2. Others important to them will approve of the behavior (normative/social belief).
3. They are personally capable of changing the behavior (control/personal belief).
4. They have some control over what would help them perform the behavior (control/personal belief).
5. They also have some control over what would hinder their ability to perform the behavior (control/personal belief).

(Elmer, *The Leaning Cycle*, p. 112-113)

c) **Putting it into practice**

1 Corinthians 6:12–20 (ESV) — ¹² "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³ "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise

us up by his power. **15** *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!* **16** *Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."* **17** *But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.* **18** *Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.* **19** *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,* **20** *for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

List the key truths and behaviours found in the passage:

Draw a picture of the relationship between the key beliefs and behaviours found in the passage:

Imagine that you are preaching to a senior high school youth group, what potential barriers might exist for people taking on these beliefs and behaviours (Use the RAA categories to help you think through this)?

1. The anticipated behavior change will be beneficial (behavioral belief).
2. Others important to them will approve of the behavior (normative/social belief).
3. They are personally capable of changing the behavior (control/personal belief).
4. They have some control over what would help them perform the behavior (control/personal belief).
5. They also have some control over what would hinder their ability to perform the behavior (control/personal belief).

Week 5: Moving from the text to us: (Part III – Affections)

a) The place of affections in the godly life

Matthew 22:37–40 (ESV) — ³⁷ *And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.* ³⁸ *This is the great and first commandment.* ³⁹ *And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* ⁴⁰ *On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

Are the following behaviours or attitudes of heart?

Colossians 3:8–10 (ESV) — ⁸ *But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.* ⁹ *Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices* ¹⁰ *and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

Colossians 3:12–14 (ESV) — ¹² *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,* ¹³ *bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.* ¹⁴ *And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

"As man is not so prone to live according to the truth he knows except it do deeply affect him, so neither doth his soul enjoy its sweetness, except speculation do pass to affection. The understanding is not the whole soul, and therefore cannot do the whole work....The understanding must take in truths, and prepare them for the will, and it must receive them and commend them to the affections;...the affections are, as it were, the bottom of the soul." (Richard Baxter)

"Spiritual affections are the seat of all sincerity, which is the jewel of divine and human conversation, the life and soul of everything that is good and praiseworthy. Whatever men pretend, as their affections are, so are they ... Affections are in the soul as the helm in the ship; if it be laid hold on by a skilful hand, he turneth the whole vessel which way he pleaseth." (John Owen)

d) Affections and decision making (recent neuroscience)

"Our new knowledge of brain anatomy now compels us to go one step further. Affect is not just necessary for wisdom; it's also irrevocably woven into the fabric of every decision."[6]

"at the level of brain circuitry, no decision can be free of affect."[7]

e) Affections and behaviour change

Ruttan and Nordgren (behaviour change in addiction):

"Affect profoundly influences behavior, such that nearly every category of psychological functioning—cognition, attention, physiology, perception, and memory—comes under the influence of affect. . . . But because much of this influence happens outside of conscious awareness . . . , people have great difficulty appreciating the full magnitude of affect's influence."[8]

"If attitudes are rooted in affect (versus cognition), persuasion attempts rooted in affect (versus cognition) are more likely to succeed . . . . Like persuasion, managing affective states may require other affective states."[9]

Functional Imagery Training (FIT) and behaviour change

f) Affections in Education

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[6] Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain*, (London: Pan Books, 2017), 80, Kindle.

[7] Feldmann Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made*, 124.

[8] Rachel L. Ruttan & Loran F. Nordgren, "Perceptions of Desire: A Hot-Cold Empathy Gap Perspective." In Wilhelm Hofmann and Loran F. Nordgren, eds., *The Psychology of Desire*, (New York: The Guilford Press, 2015), 228.

[9] Ruttan & Nordgren, "Perceptions," 239.

"The more intense an emotion, positive or negative, the more likely the thought or the experience immediately enters long term memory." (Elmer, *The Learning Cycle*, p. 59)

James Zull – *"Emotion is probably the most important factor for learning. Our feelings determine the energy with which we begin new challenges and where we will direct that energy. The actions we take are determined by how we feel and how we believe those actions will make us feel."* (in Elmer, *The Learning Cycle*, p. 60).

"Affective learning has to do with our feelings—about the class, the content, the teacher, the other learners, and even the environment. Negative feelings close the door to learning. In the classroom, negative feelings can include boredom, perceived lack of relevancy, fear of failure, embarrassment from not knowing answers, a sense the teacher does not like you or doesn't care, bullying or mockery from classmates, confusion, threat, anxiety, low grades, even conflict in the home, or the failure of a special friendship. Positive feelings, on the other hand, open the door to learning—the kind that eventually influences behavior. Positive affect includes excitement, interest, perceived value of the information, a sense the teacher respects you as well as classmates, a sense of emotional and physical safety, and relevance of content to life. 'How a person feels about a learning situation determines the amount of attention devoted to it.'" (Elmer, *The Learning Cycle*, p. 63 – quote in last sentence from David A. Sousa)

g) Affections and the preaching task

    i.   Creating affections in the moment of preaching

    Logan:

"If what matters in ultimate terms is what one really loves or hates or desires or fears (each of these words being understood not as pure passions, but as Edwardsean affections), then the preacher speaking with the authority of his Lord must seek to create sermonic situations in which love for Christ happens*, in which hatred for sin* happens*, in which desire for the blessing of God* happens*, in which fear of the consequences of sin* happens*."*[10]

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[10] Samuel T. Logan, "The Phenomenology of Preaching." In Samuel T. Logan, ed., *The Preacher and*

ii. Your own affections and preaching

Dabney:

". . . it is far more important to say that eloquence operates through all the powers of the speaker's soul . . . . Not only must the orator's reason perform the processes of perception and logic, his heart must be powerfully actuated by those processes of emotion which he seeks to propagate, his taste must thrill with those affections of sentiment which he would make ancillary to his main effect, and his will must go forth vehemently to that act to which he would decide the hearer."[11]

Jay E. Adams:

"One of the reasons why poor preaching is dull is that the preacher himself fails to experience what he is talking about as he speaks—there is no joy, sense of awe, tingling down his spine, or whatever. When he fails to relive the event it is almost axiomatic that his congregation will 'experience' that failure. In preaching, it is not enough to talk about something; the preacher himself must experience it afresh."[12]

iii. Engaging the text as an affectionate reader

An example:

Psalm 18:1–6 (ESV) — [1] *I love you, O LORD, my strength.* [2] *The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.* [3] *I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.* [4] *The cords of death*

Preaching: Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co, 1986), 156-157.

[11] Robert Lewis Dabney, *Sacred Rhethoric, or, A Course of Lectures on Preaching*, Repr (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 31-32.

[12] Adams, "Sense Appeal," In Logan, *The* Preacher, 355.

encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; ⁵ the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. ⁶ In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.

EXERCISE: Write a paragraph which involves a story or a description, rich in emotional language, that expresses the essence of what it means that God is your rock. Preach it to one another!

Week 6: Moving from the text to us: (Part IV – Situating yourself and your hearers)

a) What is the why of the text?

   Small groups:

   Read 1 Thessalonians 1.

   i.   What is Paul's purpose in 1 Thessalonians 1?

   ii.   How do you know that this is his purpose?

   iii. How might this knowledge affect the way that you preach the passage?

b) Situating ourselves and our hearers in relation to the why... (the importance of perspective)

   Small groups:

   i.   Work together on placing the preacher and the congregation in different locations with regards to Paul, the Thessalonians and those watching on. What effects to the different locations have on the nature and meaning of the sermon?

   ii.   More generally, what impacts on preaching might be expected if the preacher always stands with the author and places the congregation with the recipients of the letter?

   iii. Is it ever legitimate to have the preacher and the congregation stand together with the author?

   iv.   Should the preacher always stand with the recipients?

v. What differences do the different perspectives have on the meaning and application of passages?

c) Generating many applications and testing them against the passage

Given that Paul wrote different letters to different congregations i.e. he didn't write Galatians to the Philippians and he didn't write Romans to the Thessalonians:

i. Why should we situate the congregation with the original recipients?

ii. Would Paul have turned up and talked to your church like he spoke to the Galatians? – Why/Why not?

iii. How specific or general should we be in relating truths found in the text to ourselves and our hearers?

iv. What is closer to the author's intention and what is more peripheral? Does it matter?

v. HOW does thinking about beliefs, behaviours and affections encouraged or discouraged in a text change the nature of the preaching experience?

e.g., from 2 Corinthians 11:1-15. Here some of my notes from preparation earlier in the year:

- o "SO what is the purpose?
    - TO see the apostle in agony in order to understand the complexity of ministry?
    - To know how to respond if you're ever facing super-apostles as an apostle?
    - To think about the place of money in ministry?
    - If we do with it what we do with most other letters it's hard to work out what that would look like – e.g., the Philippians are suffering persecution and Paul ministers gospel truths to help them cling to Christ – when we suffer persecution we can cling to these great gospel truths. ➔ HOW does that work here? If you're ever in relationship with an apostle you are angry with because he won't accept financial help, then you should see that his boast is the right kind of boast to make!
    - Do you stand with the Corinthians? Do you stand with Paul? Do you stand on the edge watching on?
    - This passage is not full of gospel truths – or at least not in the way that we normally recognize such things.
    - Perhaps its an encouragement to stand firm against false teaching – although it's hard to know exactly what the content of the false teaching is – we know that it is a different gospel, a different spirit and a different Christ – but we know almost nothing about how it is different.
    - Are we supposed to imitate Paul's determination to boast in his little act of defiance ➔ gospel preaching without payment?
    - Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to return to him and the true gospel and not run after the false apostles.
    - An encouragement to engage in foolishness – for the sake of the other person – taking their framework, or undermining it?
    - Why demand his boast? Why refuse to let his boast be silenced?

- HOW significant is (v6)? ➔ *2 Corinthians 11:6 (ESV) —* **6** *Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.*

o Has Paul made it plain particularly by his refusal to engage in the money situation on the same terms as the super apostles?

o Paul, concerned for the Corinthians salvation, has decided to stand firm on his conviction not to be paid for gospel ministry – because it confounds the super-apostles and displays his love for the Corinthians, even if they can't see it!"

vi. What have I explored in trying to unpack meaning and application?

vii. What is valid and what is invalid?

Some possible applications:

- Does Paul think that he's teaching the Corinthians about how to deal wisely with money? Does that mean that this passage doesn't contain wise lessons about a proper Christian relationship with money? Should this be an application/the application?

- Is the passage an appeal to stand with Paul as the true apostle? If so, how is that helpful for the current reader? Are we ever in a situation where we are tempted to doubt Paul because of his refusal to accept our help?

- Is the passage a general call to reject false teaching? If so, how do the different pieces of the text work together to that end?

A process:
 (1) Generate a lot of applications.

(2) Once you have generated lots of applications ask –
      "What's most important for my audience and me?"

"Would the original author recognize my application as being in line with what he's saying here?"

"If I think he would, can I explain why?"!

Week 7: The Preacher as part of the process

Dabney:

". . . it is far more important to say that eloquence operates through all the powers of the speaker's soul . . . . Not only must the orator's reason perform the processes of perception and logic, his heart must be powerfully actuated by those processes of emotion which he seeks to propagate, his taste must thrill with those affections of sentiment which he would make ancillary to his main effect, and his will must go forth vehemently to that act to which he would decide the hearer."[13]

Jay E. Adams:

"One of the reasons why poor preaching is dull is that the preacher himself fails to experience what he is talking about as he speaks—there is no joy, sense of awe, tingling down his spine, or whatever. When he fails to relive the event it is almost axiomatic that his congregation will 'experience' that failure. In preaching, it is not enough to talk about something; the preacher himself must experience it afresh."[14]

a) The dangers of our culture and of theological education

    i.   Exegesis as mastery (the problem of third hand involvement with the text)

- How does your current preparation process distance you/engage you with the truth of the passage?

- Do you experience the truth and goodness of what you preach as you preach it?

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[13] Robert Lewis Dabney, *Sacred Rhethoric, or, A Course of Lectures on Preaching*, Repr (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 31-32.

[14] Adams, "Sense Appeal," In Logan, *The* Preacher, 355.

- What might help you engage more closely with the truth that you preach as you preach it?

b) Putting yourself in harm's way

   Some questions from Gwilym Davies:

- Having read and thought deeply about the passage

  o How does this change the way I view the world?

  o How does this change what I think the present time is for?

  o How does this change my view of God?

  o How does this change my view of the Lord Jesus?

  o How does this change my view of the world?

  o How does this change my view of my calling?

  o How might I need to repent or change?

  (From: Gwilym Davies, *Application*, p. 59)

- Some other suggestions for helpful questions:

  o What does this passage cause me to give thanks for?

  o How has this passage reminded me of the goodness of God, Jesus?

  o How has this passage reminded me of what good likes like in God's world?

What is the effect of asking these questions of yourself?

How does asking these questions help you develop application for others?

Are there other questions that you would want to ask?

c) Piper and praying the text

John Piper: *"The work of the Holy Spirit in the process of interpretation is not to add information, but to give to us the discipline to study and the humility to accept the truth we find without twisting it."* (Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, p. 42)

What do you agree with or disagree with in Piper's quote?

Exercise – small groups:

Read the article by John Piper and answer the questions at the end in small groups.

John Piper – "How do I pray the Bible?" (https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-do-i-pray-the-bible**)**

Welcome back to a new week on the Ask Pastor John podcast, with longtime author and pastor John Piper. Thanks for making us a part of your day. Today is episode number 999, and our question today comes from a listener named Dalibor — I think that name is Czech. "Pastor John, can you give an example or two on how to pray the Scriptures? This seems right, but also foreign to me. How do I read in such a way that the words become alive and speak to me here and now? How do my feelings reflect or get aligned with the text I'm reading now? Or even better, perhaps you would be willing to pray through a section of Scripture with us / for us?"

I love this question, because praying the Scriptures is so important in the Christian life. If we don't form the habit of praying the Scriptures, our prayers will almost certainly degenerate into vain repetitions that eventually revolve entirely around our immediate private concerns, rather than God's larger purposes. So, let me try to help Dalibor see this as less foreign. He said it felt foreign to him. Let me see if I can help make it feel less foreign.

First, we should notice that the early church prayed the Scriptures in Acts 4:24 and following. In fact, they explicitly quote Scriptures. Threats had been made against them and it says, "They lifted their voices together to God and said, 'Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them.'" They are exulting in what they know from God in Scripture. Then verses 25–26: "Who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed.'" That is a quotation from Psalm 2. So, we know that the early church prayed back to God the very words that God had given them — for example, in the Psalms.

Here is a second thing. Don't forget the obvious; namely, that many parts of the Scripture are prayers. So, simply to read them is to pray, if we are awake — if you are thinking about what you are doing. Paul has got numerous prayers that he prays for the people that he is writing his letters to. And every time we read that, we should pray with Paul. And a great portion of the Psalms are prayers, and Jesus gave us some prayers. I have used the acronym IOUS from the Psalms to guide how I pray the Scriptures:

__I__, Incline my heart to your testimonies (Psalm 119:36).
__O__, Open my eyes to see wonderful things (Psalm 119:18).
__U__, Unite my heart to fear your name (Psalm 86:11).
__S__, Satisfy me in the morning with your steadfast love (Psalm 90:14).

So, the Scripture models for us how to pray about reading the Scriptures and turning them into prayers.

And then think about this, which is so obvious: The Scriptures either tell us something about God and Christ when we are reading so that we can praise him. Or, they tell us something about what God and Christ and the Holy Spirit have done so that we can thank him and express faith in it. Or, they tell us what God expects from us so that we can cry out for his help. Or, they tell us about something we failed to do so that we can confess our sins.

So, it seems to me that virtually all the Bible is doing one or more of those four things: something about God, something about what he has done, something about what he expects, something about how we have failed, so that they naturally lead into praise to God, thanks to God, crying for help to God, and confession of sin to God.

But one caution here: Let's be realistic. What we are praying is the meaning of texts, not just words. This is important. So, for example, when reading part of the Old Testament history book that takes a whole chapter to tell a story, say, about Ahab's wickedness I just read this morning (1 Kings 21). Ahab's wickedness. And I also read this morning a whole chapter about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's faith and courage in front of that fiery furnace. Now, how do you pray Scripture like that? You don't probably turn every verse into a prayer, because it takes more than one verse to make a point. And that is my point. We are praying meaning. We are not just praying words.

So, you have to read enough of the Bible to catch the meaning. What is the author trying to say here about boldness and courage and faith in Daniel 3? And so, you might wait during three or four minutes of reading and then pause and say, "O God, make me like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and forgive me for my pansy like relation to feeling embarrassed" or whatever. And the same thing with Ahab. I just got so mad at him this morning when he took Naboth's vineyard and killed him (1 Kings 21:1–16). Oh! And the prophet came and really laid into him and told him: You are going to be in big trouble (1 Kings 21:17–24). There is so much there to pray about. But you have to read the whole chapter before you can get it right in your head.

Okay, Dalibor asked me to do this. So, I am going to close by doing it, and I wanted to do a big section, but I realized it doesn't work that way. It doesn't work that way for me. So, I am just going to start with Colossians 2:6, because I have been in Colossians in my devotions, and I am going to show you how I turn Colossians 2:6–7 into prayer. And I will break it up in two pieces. It just turned out that way.

So, here we go. This is reading from Colossians 2:6–7: "As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

Yes, Lord Jesus, I have received you and I do receive you afresh right now this morning. I welcome you to take full control of my life. If I am estranging you in any way, pushing you away at all, show me and help me to kill that sin. I want to walk in you, in your power, in your way, in your fellowship. I dedicate myself to this right now again, just like I have so many times in the past. And I turn

from all others, anything else that would compete with you as my closest friend and helper. You have given rootedness and foundation to my life. Thank you.

I didn't create these roots in you or these great foundation stones of faith. You did that. Thank you. Thank you for sending teachers into my life. Thank you for my father and Daniel Fuller and Jonathan Edwards and John Owen and J.I. Packer and R.C. Sproul and dozens of partners in ministry over the years that have exhorted me and kept me on the narrow way. Oh, how I thank you, Lord! It has all been owning to you. My reaching you and my walking in you and my rootedness and foundation in you, it is all owing to you. All my teachers were from you. You are kind and merciful, a mighty God. I love you this morning.

And then I keep reading: "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy or empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Colossians 2:8–9).

Lord Jesus, I am not even sure I know what "the elemental spirits of the world" are. But until I find out, I pray that you would protect me from them. Your work in me is way more important than my perfect understanding. Guard me. But I know something of the dangers of human tradition and philosophy. I have felt the pull of forces away from you. Oh, thank you that I am still here, right now praying and not over the cliff of unbelief. Oh, give me discernment so I can see what is according to Christ, like you said, in the books that I read, in the TV shows that I watch, in the movies and the news.

O Lord, these forces are so strong, and I am so prone to be entertained by ideas and actions that are not according to Christ. Have mercy upon me and give me the courage to say no to anything that tends to undermine my fellowship with you and my boldness in witness. How could I ever be lured away, Lord? For in you is the whole fullness of deity, Paul says, the whole fullness of deity dwelling bodily. Amazing. Amazing. Absolutely amazing. O Christ, help me all day, every day, this very day to be more amazed at you and your fullness of deity that I will never turn away — more amazed than I am at anything else. Let my amazement at your fullness of deity spill over at work today. Make me a means of others being amazed, I pray, in Jesus's name. Amen.

i. Summarize Piper's model

ii. What questions do you have as a result of what you've read?

iii. What do you notice about how he moves from the passage to prayer?

iv.   What do you think the strengths and weaknesses of the model are?

v.   Where might exercises like this fit into your own preparation?

d) Time in preparation for personal engagement

Where in your preparation process would you like to insert some of these exercises?

Could you do it in more than one place?

Week 8: Preparing to apply: What habits to you want to make your own?

a) A metaphor for the task of preaching:

Abraham Kuruvilla:

"The modus operandi *of the 'old' homiletic is to put the text through a grinder and then preach, in points, the pulverized propositional products that come out of the contraption."* (Kuruvilla, *A Vision for Preaching*, p. 77)

Fred Craddock:

"If the minister wants the sermon to do what the text does, then he or she will want to hold on to the form, since form captures and conveys function, not only during the interpretation of the text but during the designing of the sermon as well. While the sermon form may not be the same as the text; that is, a sermon on a psalm may not itself be a psalm, still one does not want to move too far from the form of the text. Much preaching that aims at propositions and themes and outlines does just that: the minister boils off all the water and then preaches the stain in the bottom of the cup. Until recent times, this was a common violation of parables, much in the manner of a father who replaces the children's bedtime story with, "The gist of what I want to say to you tonight is this." Perhaps it is enough at this point to alert ourselves in advance about the seriousness of altering form, which may alter function, which may alter content. If 'blessed are the poor in spirit' is allowed to become "we ought to be poor in spirit'; if the drama of Jesus and the blind man in John 9 is reshaped into 'there is a lot of blindness in the world; the world cannot heal its own blindness; but Jesus opens the eyes of the blind,' then many true and Christian things can be said in the sermon, but the preacher may be taken to court for violating a text." (Craddock, *Preaching*, p. 123-124)

Small groups: What do you think of Kuruvilla and Craddock's critique of our preaching method? (What do you agree with/disagree with?)

What metaphor (or metaphors) would you suggest to describe the preacher's task?

b) Course Review – what have we seen?

c) Q&A – what questions do you have at this point?

d) My question for you:

What habits, patterns, questions, processes etc. do you want to add to your preaching process and where do you want to add them as a result of doing this course? What will help you to develop application that makes living under Christ's Lordship intelligible and desirable?

<div align="center">INFORMATION AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A TRAINING
PROGRAM ON APPLICATION IN PREACHING</div>

Dear Prospective Candidate
Please consider this a formal invitation to participate in a training program aimed at developing your abilities in developing application in preaching. Please take time to review the objectives of the training program and the expectations of your participation. If you wish to participate and are willing to commit yourself to meeting the expectations, then please sign at the bottom and respond to the short-answer question over the page in your own words. Return the completed application to me.

I look forward to our time together.

Paul Grimmond

Training Course Objectives
To equip you with the understanding and skills to develop biblically faithful, relevant application in preaching.

Training Course Expectations
1. The training program will occur over 8 weeks, 3:00-4:30pm Tuesday on the following dates: Jul 26, Aug 2, 9, 23, 30, Sept 13, 20, 27. You will be expected to attend all of the sessions or to communicate your inability to attend prior to the classes in cases of medical or personal circumstances that make attendance impossible.
2. You will be required to fill out a survey prior to commencing the program and at the completion of the program.

SIGNED BY_____DATE_____

APPENDIX 5

T-TESTS ON RAW TIME DATA

Given the debate around the validity of dependent t-tests performed on percentage data, this appendix shows the t-test results for the raw time data for time spent in developing application in sermon preparation and the time given to application in the sermon from the pre and post surveys.

The time in hours spent in preparation for the development of application and the time in minutes devoted to application in the sermon are shown in tables 1 and 2 below.

Table A1. Comparison of preparation time (in hours) used for
developing application from pre and post surveys

Participant	Pre	Post
3522	2.0	3.0
5356	2.0	2.0
5308	2.0	7.0
5342	2.0	1.5
5464	2.0	7.5
3700	4.0	2.0
3115	12.0	10.0
5713	2.0	7.0
7986	0.5	2.0
4045	1.5	2.0
4075	1.5	5.0
7929	1.0	5.0
3283	4.0	3.0
4755	3.0	1.5
7835	0.5	1.0

Table A2. Comparison of time in sermon (in minutes) dedicated
to application from pre and post surveys

Participant	Pre	Post
3522	4.5	12.0
5356	5.0	5.0
5308	6.0	9.0
5342	4.0	6.0
5464	5.0	10.0
3700	10.0	8.0
3115	15.0	15.0
5713	7.5	10.0
7986	3.0	6.0
4045	3.0	7.0
4075	4.0	9.0
7929	5.0	12.0
3283	8.0	5.0
4755	6.0	5.0
7835	8.0	10.0

The mean time in preparation used for the development of application in the most recent sermon preached before the course commenced was 2.7 hours. This compared to the mean time in preparation used for the development of application in the most recent sermon preached before the final survey of 4.0 hours. A dependent t-test for the sample ($t = -1.899, p = .078 > 0.05$) indicates a failure to reach the threshold for the statistical significance of this change. However, the mean time dedicated to application in the sermon rose from 6.2 minutes in the most recent sermon preached before the course to 8.6 minutes for the most recent sermon preached before the final survey. The dependent t-test ($t = -2.901, p = .011 < 0.05$) indicates statistical significance.

The raw time data for time spent on application in sermon preparation shows a significant increase in the mean but the p-value indicates that there is not sufficient probability that this is a statistically significant result. The variance between this result and the percentage result reported in the body of the paper suggests that the change in

behavior around time taken to develop application in sermon preparation should be seen with some caution.

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING STUDENTS AT MOORE THEOLOGICAL
COLLEGE TO DEVELOP BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL,
RELEVANT APPLICATION IN PREACHING

Paul Steven Grimmond, DMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Brian J. Vickers

This project was designed to equip students at Moore Theological to develop biblically faithful, relevant application in preaching. Students participated in an 8-week training program and evaluated themselves with regards to knowledge and skills in application before and after the program. Chapter 1 explores the ministry context in which the project takes place, outlining rationale, purpose, goals, research methodologies, definitions, and limitations. Chapter 2 argues biblically that application is essential to preaching because of God's purposes in the gospel. Chapter 3 examines key elements necessary for doing better application, including the interdependent nature of meaning and application, the importance of addressing the hearer's behaviors, beliefs, and affections, and the preacher's self-awareness and personal godliness. Chapter 4 details the curriculum and course implementation. Chapter 5 evaluates the project by measuring against the stated goals.

VITAE

PAUL STEVEN GRIMMOND

EDUCATION
>BSc (Comp. Sci.), University of New South Wales, 1993
>BD, Moore Theological College, 2000

PUBLICATIONS
>"Letting the Word Do the Work: A Constructive Account of Expositional Preaching." In *Theology Is for Preaching: Biblical Foundations, Method, and Practice*, edited by Chase R. Kuhn and Paul Grimmond, 286-97. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021.
>(with Phillip D. Jensen) *The Archer and the Arrow: Preaching the Very Words of God*. Kingsford, New South Wales: Matthias Media, 2010.

ORGANIZATIONS
>Family Systems Institute, Sydney, Australia (Board Member)
>Sydney Anglican Ministry, Training, and Development Board (Board Member)

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT
>Dean of Students and Lecturer in Ministry and Mission, Moore Theological College, Sydney, Australia, 2017-

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT
>Assistant Minister, St Matthias Anglican Church, Centennial Park, New South Wales, 2001-2002
>Acting Senior Minister then Senior Minister, Unichurch (UNSW), Kensington, New South Wales, 2003-2008
>Editor and Author for Matthias Media, 2008-2009
>Senior Assistant Minister, Unichurch (UNSW), Kensington, New South Wales, 2010-2016