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SPEECH ACT THEORY AND THE THEOLOGICAL
CONVICTIONS OF PREACHING

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APPROVAL SHEET

**SPEECH ACT THEORY AND THE THEOLOGICAL
CONVICTIONS OF PREACHING**

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To Jennifer,

My wife,

Who fears the Lord and is worthy of praise (Proverbs 31:30),

And to my beautiful children,

Elijah Christopher,

Evelyn Grace,

Elliana Mae,

I love you.

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PREFACE

This contribution to Christian preaching has been achieved because of the multitude of people God has provided throughout my life. To achieve this accomplishment took more than my personal intellect or perseverance; instead, it took a collective of people to disciple and to prepare me to arrive at this moment. Because of my finite memory and mental exhaustion from writing this dissertation, I want to begin by giving a blanket thank you to everyone who has contributed to my academic life and spiritual life. However, I would like to take the time to give special recognition to those who have made significant investments in my life.

First, thank you, Southern Seminary, for the opportunity to study and contribute to the field of Christian preaching. My experience in the PhD program has been both rewarding and edifying to my spiritual life, academic life, and pastoral life. I am thankful for every seminar, professor, and fellow student that has been part of this opportunity. I want to say a special thank you to my committee: Drs. Robert Vogel, Hershael York, and Bruce Ware. To Dr. Ware, I will be forever grateful for your biblical spirituality seminar that deepened and simplified my understanding and ability to teach and experience the Christian life. Dr. York, not only did you grow my academic understanding of Christian preaching and Pauline studies, I am grateful to have witnessed your love and affection for local church pastoring. To Dr. Vogel, my supervisor, words will never express my deep appreciation for your commitment, patience, thoroughness, and companionship throughout the writing process. I would not be at this point without your wisdom and feedback. I long to replicate your desire to see your students grow and achieve their goals.

Second, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous foundation established in my life during my six years at Spurgeon College and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. My time in the college and seminary prepared me academically, professionally, and spiritually to become by God's grace the pastor, father, and husband that I am today. To everyone who was part of this season of my life, thank you for the discipleship. To Dr. Jim Anderson, I think you single-handedly taught my collegiate experience and formed an early and deep passion for the Word of God. My time with Dr. Rustin Umstatt in Theology I and II strengthened my desire for theological conversation in both the local church and Christian studies. Thank you, Dr. Alan Branch, for calling me and equipping me to be a man of biblical convictions. To Dr. Alan Tomlinson, your humility, love, and dependency on the Lord Jesus Christ have forever shaped my life. While you taught me a tremendous amount of biblical wisdom, who you were as a man of God has been monumental in my life. Finally, Dr. Ben Awbrey, no one has been more influential in my pulpit ministry than you. My time with you intensified my passion for preaching God's Word with faithfulness and force!

Third, throughout my academic pursuits, God has provided some incredible people. All the way back to elementary school, God provided four boys that got me through some challenging times: Troy Snyder, Ryan Armstrong, Paul Golden, and Mason Evans. In High School, God continued to provide me with another academic counterpart and dear friend: Stephanie Frazon. During my collegiate and graduate studies, God blessed me tremendously with Chad "the cookie" Melton. Lastly, during my years in the PhD program at Southern, I am deeply thankful for my colleagues: Jared Bumpers, Scott Gilbert, Craig Seals, Dustin Nelson, Justin Sampler, and Aaron Kraft. This body of people assisted me in every step I took from Kindergarten to Doctoral studies; thank you!

Fourth, I want to acknowledge that I am the product of local church ministry. The Gathering Baptist Church of Independence, MO, (which will forever be known to me

as Noland Road Baptist Church) was the local body of believers that adopted me and introduced me to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior! To every church member and from the bottom of my heart, you will never honestly know the blessing you are to me. I spend every day trying to be and lead a church to be what you all were to me: a family. I could write another fifty thousand words about my gratitude for you all. No matter how far God calls me away or how long it has been, you all will always be my home church.

While Noland Road will always be home, Carnegie Baptist Church of Saint Joseph, MO, will always be the beginning of my pastoral ministry. I never have, and I pray that I never will take for granted the opportunity and blessing of being your pastor. I am grateful that you could look past the sixteen-year-old appearance and see the twenty-three-year-old man who loved to lead and preach. While many people say that I quickly became over-qualified for such a smaller congregation, the truth is that the longer I served, the more appreciative I became that you all loved my wife and me, provided for us, encouraged us, and followed our lead to glorify God. A special thanks to Carey Pearson, who stood by me and encouraged me to preach the Word of God and to lead the local church as God had called me to do.

To Journey Baptist Church, my current pastorate and church family, my family and I could not feel more loved and appreciated. Our family has a deep affection for every church member and an appreciation for every one of you. You all have helped us raise our kids, grow spiritually, strengthen our giftedness, accomplish our goals, be faithful to our callings, and be transparent about our need for you. Being called to pastoral ministry is not a calling to a church name or institution; instead, it is a calling to a group of believers. We are abundantly grateful that God has called us to you. A special thanks to the McComb scholarship fund that paid for most of my PhD studies at Southern. I want to express my overwhelming love and gratitude for Janis Bryant, who faithfully welcomed me and served with me for six years at JBC. You were always more

than my secretary; you were my ministry partner and my dear workplace mother!

Fifth, I would like to thank Wes Wakefield and Calvin Haynes. To Wes, aka “Boss Man,” your investment in my life is immeasurable. My academic achievements, my pastoral ministry, my servant heart, my marriage, and my parenthood all show reflections of you. Some of the most challenging times in my life were discussed over a shake at 31 flavors, Baskin Robins. I have always admired the fact that you strive to be whom Christ has made you to be. You taught me from day one that ministry is not about success but faithfulness, that ministry is about relationships, and that the strength of a ministry is the team rather than a star pastor. Thank you. Your discipleship and mentorship created the DNA of many things that I am proud of and enjoy the most: the local church, pastoral ministry, family.

To Calvin Haynes, I could not have a better ministry partner than you. The man and pastor that I am has been shaped tremendously by our relationship as friends, ministry partners, and brothers. You have instilled in me a desire for righteousness and faithfulness. The love and loyalty between our families and us mean the world to me. I am incredibly blessed and appreciative of our ministry partnership—a decade of faithful preaching and teaching of God’s Word. Moreover, the blessing of our brotherhood is seemingly incalculable. Thank you for accepting me and all my unique and beautiful flaws, for motivating me to be a better man, for holding me accountable, for carrying the pastoral burden with me, and for always being there. You are a wonderful man of God, and I am blessed to have you in my life.

Sixth, I have a lot of thanksgiving for my parents, Margie and Jerry Thomas, and my brothers, Ryan and Brandon McMillian. You all have supported me and stood with me throughout my life. I have been blessed to have a caring and loving family that always believed in me and did what needed to be done to provide for me. I am thankful that my family has always encouraged my faith in Jesus Christ and my calling to serve

through pastoral ministry. Being the youngest, I am the product of each of you, and I hope you have joy and pride in knowing that everything I accomplish is a testimony of your all's hard work and commitment. I love you all!

And finally, to my wife and kids, I could not be more satisfied and proud of each of you. Jennifer, you have been more than I ever could have asked for in a wife. I am so blessed to get to do life with you and witness the extraordinary woman that Christ has made you to be. The challenges and obstacles you have overcome and your consistent presence in my life are incredible. You are my favorite illustration of what God can do in the life of someone who loves and trusts Him. I love you! To my kids, Elijah Christopher, Evelyn Grace, and Elliana Mae, I strive to be the dad that I lost in my childhood. I desire to love you through every season of life and I pray that one day you will repent and believe in the Jesus that has radically changed your parents. I am proud to be your dad.

I want to conclude by acknowledging one that is too great to be included or rank alongside those mentioned above, Jesus Christ. You are my Lord and Savior. You called me out of the darkness when I was thirteen and into your glorious kingdom of light. I want to thank you for everything that you have made me to be and everything and everyone that you have blessed me with. I long to glorify you by living according to your Word and proclaiming your Word. I ask you now, as I have since you called me to pastoral ministry, please help me to be faithful to your calling of knowing you and making you known.

Jacob McMillian

Saint Joseph, Missouri

May 2021

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the most famous quotations concerning the priority of preaching comes from Dr. Lloyd-Jones, “the supreme work of the Christian minister is the work of preaching.”¹ Dr. Lloyd-Jones has not been the only theologian to prioritize preaching in the church. In 1870, John Broadus wrote that preaching is “characteristic of Christianity” and “must always be a necessity.”² Between the time of Broadus and Dr. Lloyd-Jones, G. Campbell Morgan penned that “the supreme work of the Christian minister is the work of preaching.”³ Over a century after Broadus, Dr. Albert Mohler continues to elevate the act of preaching in Christianity. He writes, “The heart of Christian worship is the authentic preaching of the Word of God.”⁴ Preaching is a preeminent priority for the pastor and the local church.

Theological Convictions of Preaching

One’s theology determines the priority given to preaching. Specifically involved are biblical convictions concerning the Bible, the preacher, the audience, and the Holy Spirit.⁵ The different positions held on these doctrines are what support or

¹David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 27.

²John Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, (1870; repr., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 1-2.

³G. Campbell Morgan, *Preaching* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1937), 11.

⁴Albert Mohler Jr., *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 36–37.

⁵These convictions will be covered briefly in the introduction. Chapter two of the dissertation will cover many of these convictions more thoroughly as part of the dissertation’s theology of preaching.

diminish the priority of preaching in Christianity. The following sections highlight biblical convictions that encourage placing a high view on preaching in the local church.

The Bible is the Word of God

Believing that the Bible is God’s Word encourages a high view of preaching. Believing Scripture is the Word of God begins with inspiration—God’s sovereign act of recording divine revelation through a chosen man for His people. Erickson defines inspiration as the “supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the Scripture writers which rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or which resulted in what they wrote actually being the Word of God.”⁶ J. I. Packer defines inspiration “as a supernatural, providential influence of God’s Holy Spirit upon the human authors which caused them to write what He wished to be written for the communication of revealed truth to others.”⁷ These definitions explain inspiration and support the Bible as being God’s Word written through human instruments.

The question that inevitably follows in the conversation of inspiration is the relationship between God and man regarding authorship. Grudem discusses such relationship,

In cases where the ordinary human personality and writing style of the author were prominently involved, as seems the case with the major part of Scripture, all that we are able to say is that God’s providential oversight and direction of the life of each author was such that their personalities, their backgrounds and training, their abilities to evaluate events in the world around them, their access to historical data, their judgment with regard to the accuracy of information, and their individual circumstances when they wrote, were all exactly what God wanted them to be, so that when they actually came to the point of putting pen to paper, the words were fully their own words but also fully the words that God wanted them to write, words that God would also claim as his own.⁸

⁶Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 225.

⁷J. I. Packer, “Fundamentalism” and the Word of God; *Some Evangelical Principles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1964), 77.

⁸Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 81.

Packer describes this relationship as “concurrent:”

We are to think of the Spirit’s inspiring activity, and, for that matter, of all His regular operations in and upon human personality, as (to use an old but valuable technical term) *concurrent*; that is, as exercised in, through and by means of the writer’s own activity, in such a way that their thinking and writing was *both* free and spontaneous on their part *and* divinely elicited and controlled, and what they wrote was not only their own work but also God’s work.⁹

Thus, believing in full inspiration is believing the Scripture proclaimed is entirely God’s declaration through and for His people. Since the explanation and application of God’s Word are central to biblical preaching, the belief in inspiration encourages a high view of Christian preaching.

By-products of inspiration include the Bible’s infallibility and inerrancy. ‘Infallible’ denotes the quality of never deceiving or misleading, and so means ‘wholly trustworthy and reliable’; ‘inerrant’ means ‘wholly true.’¹⁰ Packer grounds infallibility and inerrancy in the character and eternal nature of God.¹¹ Since the Bible is God’s Word, and God cannot lie and abides forever, then the Bible is trustworthy for all ages. Erickson includes correct interpretation of cultural and communicational developments as necessary for inerrancy. He writes, “The Bible, when correctly interpreted in light of the level to which culture and the means of communication had developed at the time it was written, and in view of the purposes for which it was given, is fully truthful in all that it affirms.”¹²

The importance of biblical infallibility and inerrancy is the issue of authority. If the Bible is not trustworthy, how can one place faith in its assertions concerning

⁹Packer, “*Fundamentalism*” and the Word of God; *Some Evangelical Principles*, 80.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 95.

¹¹Packer understands infallibility and inerrancy to be grounded in two confessions of faith, “What Scripture says is to be received as the infallible Word of the infallible God, and to assert biblical inerrancy and infallibility is just to confess faith in (i) the divine origin of the Bible and (ii) the truthfulness and trustworthiness of God.” *Ibid.*, 95–96.

¹²Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 259.

salvation, creation, sanctification, and all other theological doctrines? However, since the Bible is infallible and inerrant, one can trust Scripture to be “the rule of faith and life in His Church.”¹³ Because the Bible is God’s authoritative word that is trustworthy and without error, it is the final authority for all it addresses. Vines and Shaddix agree, “If the Bible is inspired by God and consequently void of error, then it can be trusted as the sole authority for matters of faith.”¹⁴

The authoritative, inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God is beneficial for man’s understanding of who God is and what God desires from them. Grudem wrote, “The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly.”¹⁵ Vines and Shaddix wrote, “A high view of the inspiration of Scripture and an unshakable dependence upon its authority will give you confidence in its ability to transform lives.”¹⁶ Once again, if biblical preaching focuses on explaining and applying the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God, then the Christian faith should prioritize it.

¹³Packer, “*Fundamentalism*” and the Word of God; *Some Evangelical Principles*, 73.

¹⁴Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 53. Erickson reaches the same conclusion in his chapter of authority of God’s Word which followed his chapters on inerrancy and inspiration: “This volume proposes that God himself is the ultimate authority in religious matters. He has the right, both by virtue of who he is and what he does, to establish the standard for belief and practice. With respect to major issues he does not exercise authority in a direct fashion, however. Rather, he has delegated that authority by creating a book, the Bible. Because it conveys his message, the Bible carries the same weight God himself would command if he were speaking to us personally.” Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 271.

¹⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 127.

¹⁶Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 56.

The Preacher is an Obedient Servant

Viewing the preacher as an obedient servant of those involved in the preaching event encourages a high view of preaching. The following quote from Adam and the apostle Paul in Colossians 1 supports the claim that the preacher is a servant of God who serves God's Word to God's people. Adam identifies three parties that he and other preachers serve: "We serve God and Christ in our preaching as we are true to God, his purpose for preaching and his call to us to be servants of his Word and of his people."¹⁷ The apostle Paul names the same three (God, Word, and Church) in Colossians 1:25-29 (unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the Christian Standard Bible):

25 I have become its servant, according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 God wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 I labor for this, striving with his strength that works powerfully in me.

The preacher serves God by fulfilling his God-given call to preach. God commissions the contemporary preacher to preach in the same manner that Paul commissions Timothy to "preach the word" in 2 Timothy 4:2. That simple imperative frames the act of preaching as an act of obedience.¹⁸ The preacher's obedience to preach aligns with his pastoral responsibilities to equip the saints (Eph 4), shepherd the flock (1 Pet 5), and guard the church against false teaching (1 and 2 Tim).¹⁹ Preaching is obedient servanthood to God.

¹⁷Peter Adam, *Speaking God's Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2004), 126.

¹⁸Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 39.

¹⁹John Stott sees preaching as part of the pastor's fulfillment to "feeding, guiding (because sheep easily go astray), guarding (against predatory wolves) and healing (binding up the wounds of the injured)." John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (1982; repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 120.

Preaching is servanthood to the Word of God by explaining its message and applying its force upon the hearer.²⁰ The direct object of the imperative “preach” in 2 Timothy 4:2 is “the Word.”²¹ The preeminent task of preaching is to proclaim God’s Word. Mohler writes, “Of course this is not to say that there are not other issues, other responsibilities, and even other priorities. But it is to say that there is only one central, nonnegotiable, immovable, and essential priority, and that is the preaching of the Word of God.”²² Biblical preaching’s non-negotiable commitment to serving the Word of God to God’s people motivates a deep passion for preaching in the church.

The preacher serves the gathered church. An aim of explaining and applying the Word of God is the transformation of the hearer. The goal of preaching is not merely to impart information but to provide the means of transformation ordained by a sovereign God that will affect the lives and destinies of eternal souls committed to a preacher’s spiritual care.²³ The preacher’s pastoral heart longs to see his faithful service to God and the Word of God be used by God to convert the sinner and mature the church. Graeme

²⁰Defining preaching down to explaining and applying the Word of God to the audience is a simplification of many more thorough definitions of preaching. Haddon Robinson defines expository preaching as “the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.” Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 20. Donald Sunukjian understands preaching as a twofold task, “to present the true and exact meaning of the biblical text (‘look at what God is saying....’) and in a manner that is relevant to the contemporary listener (‘...to us’).” Donald Robert Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2007), 9–10. Hershanel York defines expository preaching as “is any kind of preaching that shows people the meaning of a biblical text and leads them to apply it to their lives.” Hershanel W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 33.

²¹Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), sec. IV, pt. C, Logos Software.

²²Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 77.

²³Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 25.

Goldsworthy wonderfully articulates the pastoral desire for submission to the Word of God through preaching:

Evangelical preachers have an agenda. We want to proclaim Christ in the most effective way possible. We want to see people converted and established in the Christian life on the surest foundation—the word of God. We want to see people grow in their spiritual understanding and in godliness. We want to see churches grow, mature, and serve the world by reaching out to it with the gospel and with works of compassion. We want to impact our local communities through evangelism and ministries of caring. We want to strengthen our families and to nurture the children in the gospel. And at the heart of this agenda is the conviction that God has charged us with the ministry of preaching and teaching the Bible as a prime means of achieving these goals. Evangelical preachers stand in a long and venerable tradition going back to the apostles. It is a tradition of the centrality of the preached word in the life of the Christian congregation. We believe that preaching is not some peripheral item in the program of the local church, but that it lies at the very heart of what it is to be the people of God. We understand the activity of preaching as the primary way in which the congregations of God’s people express their submission to his word.²⁴

The preacher is a servant of God, the Word of God, and the gathered church. The preacher serves God by fulfilling his calling to preach. Through explanation, illustration, and application, the preacher serves God’s Word. The preacher serves the gathered church by calling them to submit to the Word, resulting in transformation. The preacher’s motivation to serve in this capacity is to glorify God, exalt Christ, mature the saint, and convert the sinner.²⁵ The preacher’s servanthood encourages a high view of preaching because preaching becomes a gathered audience being served the Word of God by a servant of God.

²⁴Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 1.

²⁵Peter Adam uses Charles Simeon’s three questions in determining if a sermon accomplished its aim: “Does it uniformly tend to humble the sinner? To exalt the Saviour? To promote holiness?” Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 125. Mohler grounds his aim of preaching in Colossians 1:28, “To that end, we preach Christ in three ways. As Paul says in Colossians 1:28, we *proclaim* Christ, we *warn* people, and we *teach* people—all to the end of bringing Christians to maturity in Christ Jesus.” Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 82.

The Gathered Audience Needs Transformation

Affirming the gathered audience's incompleteness and need for spiritual transformation encourages a high view of preaching. Vines and Shaddix said, "Preaching was never intended to be a general dispensation of information void of any consideration of the listeners."²⁶ The audience's spiritual incompleteness requires equipping, teaching, rebuking, commissioning, conversion, and the like. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote, "Essentially I mean that the moment you consider man's real need, and also the nature of the salvation announced and proclaimed in the Scriptures, you are driven to the conclusion that the primary task of the Church is to preach and to proclaim this, to show man's real need, and to show the only remedy, the only cure for it."²⁷

Chapell's Fallen Condition Focus (FCF) provides a great example of preaching targeting the gathered audience's need for transformation. Chapell derives man's incompleteness from Scripture's purpose to complete humanity:

Since God designed the Bible to complete us for the purpose of his glory, the necessary implication is that in some sense we are incomplete. We lack the equipment required for every good work. Our lack of wholeness is a consequence of the fallen condition in which we live. Aspects of this fallenness that are reflected in our sinfulness and in our world's brokenness prompt Scripture's instruction and construction. Paul writes, "Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scripture we might have hope" (Romans 15:4).²⁸

For Chapell, the FCF focuses on explaining how Scripture can complete the hearer through faith in Christ and God's grace. He defines the FCF as "the mutual human condition that contemporary believers share with those to or about whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage for God's people to glorify and enjoy

²⁶Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 26.

²⁷Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 37.

²⁸Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 49–50.

him.”²⁹ All humanity shares a common incompleteness that can only be made right through submission to the Word of God. Biblical exposition binds the preacher and the people to the only source of true spiritual change.³⁰

Haddon Robinson holds a high view of preaching motivated by his biblical convictions of man’s depravity and God’s holiness. Robinson writes of the unique power of the preached Word: “A power comes through the word preached that even the inerrant written word cannot replace.”³¹ Robinson views preaching highly because of what God accomplishes through preaching, “Through the preaching of the Scriptures, God encounters men and women to bring them to salvation (II Tim. 3:15) and to richness and ripeness of Christian character (II Tim. 3:16-17).³² Robinson’s approach to application centers on God’s holiness and man’s depravity:

First, I abstract up to God. Every passage has a vision of God, such as God as Creator or Sustainer. Second, I ask, "What is the depravity factor? What in humanity rebels against that vision of God?"

These two questions are a helpful clue in application because God remains the same, and human depravity remains the same. Our depravity may look different, but it’s the same pride, obstinacy, disobedience.³³

Biblical preaching’s vitality—God’s means of saving the lost and sanctifying the saved—supports the supremacy given to the task in the Christian faith.

The Holy Spirit Empowers Preaching

Acknowledging the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in preaching encourages a high view of preaching. The Holy Spirit’s ministry includes both the

²⁹Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 50.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 30.

³¹Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 17.

³²*Ibid.*, 19.

³³An interview with Haddon Robinson, “The Heresy of Application,” *Leadership Journal*, accessed April 7, 2014, www.christianitytoday.com/le/1997/fall/714020.html. (Accessed April 7, 2014).

preacher's preparation and delivery along with the hearer's comprehension and application. Adam agrees, "It is the work of the Spirit in the preacher as well as in the hearer that God uses to bring his Spirit-inspired Word to effect in human lives."³⁴ Vines and Shaddix provide an excellent overview of the Spirit's work in preaching:

The message of the Bible is communicated through a twofold medium: the Holy Spirit and a human personality. From outset to conclusion, preaching is the communication of the Holy Spirit. John Knox said, "True preaching from start to finish is the work of the Spirit." He inspired the Word we preach. He illuminates our understanding as to its meaning. He anoints our communication of it. He enlightens the minds of listeners. He convicts their hearts and prompts them to respond. Preaching is the Holy Spirit's event. If He is left out, preaching does not happen.³⁵

With both the preacher and the hearer, the Spirit provides illumination of the Word of God. MacArthur defines illumination as "the work of the Holy Spirit that opens one's spiritual eyes to comprehend the meaning of the Word of God."³⁶ The opening of one's spiritual eyes includes the preacher's eyes during the sermon's preparation and the hearers' eyes during the sermon's delivery. MacArthur describes illumination as the "present, personal, and subjective work of the Holy Spirit."³⁷ The Holy Spirit was active in recording God's truth in Scripture and is still active in conveying an understanding of that objective truth.

The Spirit's work continues from illumination to application. The Spirit is the agent that applies the truthfulness of Scripture and begins the work of transformation. The extraordinary but regular means by which God transforms lives is through His Word, which is accompanied by the regenerating, convicting, and enabling power of His

³⁴Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 119.

³⁵Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 25.

³⁶John MacArthur, *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 78.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 79.

Spirit.³⁸ Adam writes, “The Scripture itself is a product of the Spirit, and when the Spirit works in the preacher and in the hearers, the words of God are mediated and bear fruit in the lives of those who hear.”³⁹ Chapell illustrates, “The work of the Spirit is as inextricably linked to preaching as heat is to the light a bulb emits. When we present the light of God’s Word, his Spirit performs his purposes of warming, melting, and conforming hearts to his will.”⁴⁰ Along with illumination, the Spirit applies Scripture’s truthfulness to the hearer’s heart to bring about new life and mature life in Jesus Christ.

In summary, theological convictions impact one’s view of preaching. The core convictions concerning the preaching event include the Bible, the preacher, the Holy Spirit, and man’s spiritual incompleteness. This section has provided the following convictions that encourage a high view of preaching in the church: (1) The Scripture proclaimed is the authoritative and inspired Word of God. (2) The preacher is faithfully proclaiming the Word as an obedient servant. (3) The audience needs spiritual life and maturity through submission to the Word of God. (4) The Spirit enables understanding and application to the submitted hearer of God’s proclaimed Word by God’s called messenger. Holding to the convictions above concerning the parties included in the preaching event results in granting preaching an elevated priority in the church.

The Conversation of the Preaching Event

Theologically, preaching is the transmission of God’s authoritative Word to His people through the preacher by the Spirit’s enabling power on the preacher and hearer. Linguistically, preaching is oral communication between a preacher and a gathered audience. Greg Heisler provides a sufficient starting point in exploring the oral

³⁸Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 33.

³⁹Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 118.

⁴⁰Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 33.

communication of preaching by understanding preaching as three parties involved in one theological conversation about the Word of God. The conversation includes the preacher, the hearer, and the Holy Spirit.⁴¹ Heisler employs the term “trialogue” to define the three-way conversation about the Word of God. Heisler explains his term triologue as follows:

Preaching as triologue means the presentation of the message becomes a three-way conversation between the preacher, the audience, and the Holy Spirit. What are they all talking about? The Word of God! Preaching as triologue reminds us of the dynamic and interactive element of preaching because preaching does not happen in a vacuum. The Spirit’s wants to contribute actively and directly to the triologue by quickening the hearts and minds of the audience to hear and respond to the Word and by empowering and guiding the preacher’s presentation of the Word of God.

Spirit-led preaching as a triologue emphasizes the fact that the Spirit, the preacher, and the audience are meeting together to hear and experience the Word of God together. Powerful preaching comes through the dynamic interaction of the three entities: (1) The preacher proclaims the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. (2) The Spirit gives his testimonium to the Word being preached. (3) The audience resounds with “amen, it’s true!” as they yield to the Spirit’s inward application of the proclaimed Word of God to their own hearts.

Only in the triologue—where the Spirit, the preacher, and the audience are all engaged in a three-way transformational convergence centered on the Word of God—does powerful preaching take place.⁴²

The definition of preaching by Vines and Shaddix corresponds to Heisler’s triologue conception: “The oral communication of biblical truth by the Holy Spirit through a human personality to a given audience with the intent of enabling a positive

⁴¹Dr. Lloyd-Jones labels the linguistic monologue a transaction between the preacher and hearer. The transaction includes three parties: preacher, hearer, and God. “Preaching is that which deals with the total person, the hearer becomes involved and knows that he has been dealt with and addressed by God through this preacher.” Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 65–67. Along similar lines, Klass Runia, understands preaching as a monologue that includes a dialogical nature. The dialogical nature is God speaking to his people through spokesman about their lives. Runia is in agreement that three parties are present: God, messenger, hearer. Runia states, “Scripture itself teaches us that God speaking to his people is always dialogical in its very nature. God’s revelation to his people is never a proclamation of some abstract, purely objective truth, but God always reveals himself into their active situation.” Klass Runia, *The Sermon under Attack*, Moore College Lectures (1980; repr., Exeter: Paternoster, 1983), 71.

⁴²Greg Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit’s Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2007), 114–15.

response.”⁴³ The correlation exists in the mode (oral communication), the message (the Bible), the medium (Holy Spirit and man), and the mark (the hearer). To borrow with small modification an illustration from Liefeld, one should picture the preaching event as a biblical text hanging amid three parties discussing it: the preacher, the Spirit, and the hearer.⁴⁴ The trialogue understanding of preaching provides insight as to how the authority of God’s Word transmits in preaching when the preacher orchestrates a theological conversation about the Word of God between the preacher, the Spirit, and the hearer.

While theology can identify the parties involved, linguistics can help explain and express what is being done and by whom during the sermon. A linguistic theory can help explain the dual communication of preaching, the partnership of Spirit and preacher. The Spirit’s work of accomplishing understanding, conviction, and application through oral communication is linguistically explainable. Another linguistic explanation is how the Spirit of God and preacher use Scripture to command, assert, promise, and declare God’s active and living Word. This dissertation provides such linguistic elaboration of preaching by drawing upon Speech Act Theory.⁴⁵

Thesis

A linguistic theory helps further explain communication in the preaching event, mainly to explain the trialogue conversation about God’s Word. Speech Act

⁴³Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 18.

⁴⁴Walter L Liefeld, *New Testament Exposition: From Text to Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 12.

⁴⁵Speech act theory (SAT) is a sub-discipline in philosophy of language that argues that language has a performative aspect. SAT demonstrates that language is doing more than stating true or false assertions. Rather, all language is made up of the basic communicative unit of a speech act that has three aspects: locution (uttering and propositional content), illocution (force of speaker’s intention), and perlocution (consequential effects upon the hearer). The main two theorists used in this dissertation is J. L. Austin and John Searle. The theory is introduced in chapter three and discussed throughout chapters four thru six.

Theory (SAT) is a linguistic theory that can offer such assistance, explaining what biblical preaching is doing and accomplishing. SAT can explain and bring together all parties included in the preaching event: Holy Spirit, preacher, Bible, and hearer. SAT's narrow focus on the individual speech acts of communication provides the needed vocabulary and explanation of linguistics to understand preaching's communication further.

Further, SAT explains the transmission of God's authority through the preacher. SAT's understanding of the sentence in three parts is helpful: locution (uttering content), illocution (force), perlocution (consequential effects). The authority of preaching begins with the preacher's locutionary act—Spirit-empowered utterance of theocentric propositions. God's authority expressed in the Word of God is then mediated through the illocutionary acts of the preacher and Holy Spirit. The illocutionary act is the sentence's force, such as asserting, commanding, promising, declaring, or expressing. The preacher speaks with authority, not of himself but God, as he asserts God's truth, commands God's statutes, declares God's pronouncements, expresses God's holiness, and offers God's promises. Lastly, the Spirit uses speech's perlocutionary capabilities to convict the hearer by applying the Spirit-filled proclamation of theocentric content.

A second linguistic explanation of SAT relates to the Spirit's empowering of the sermon's force. The apostle Paul reminded the Thessalonians how in the power of the Spirit, they correctly received his preaching as the Word of God rather than a message of man (1 Thess 1). In general, speech acts entail illocutionary acts (force), but in preaching, the Holy Spirit empowers them. The theological conviction that preaching is Spirit-filled is linguistically discussed using SAT's illocutionary categories, rules, and conditions. The Spirit's involvement is seen in fulfilling the necessary conditions for illocutionary acts: preparatory, sincerity, essential, and propositional. His involvement linguistically explains what is meant by Spirit-filled preaching and why Heisler and Shaddix and Vines include the Spirit in the preaching conversation.

The third linguistic explanation that SAT provides shows how the preacher accomplishes his pastoral responsibilities of preaching the Word of God. Stott's portraits illustrate the Bible's teaching on the preacher's responsibilities: stewarding, heralding, testifying, and serving God's Word.⁴⁶ Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts provides the categories necessary to illustrate each portrait. For example, the preacher stewarding the Word of God is asserting, commissioning, and expressing. Alternatively, when the preacher is heralding God's Word, he is commanding and declaring. While overlap exists, with different portraits using some of the same illocutionary acts, SAT taxonomy establishes how the portraits operate linguistically in the sermon.

The fourth explanation that SAT provides is the relationship between the hearer's understanding (illocutionary success) and the consequential effects upon the hearer (illocutionary achievement). Preaching is a spiritual gift given to the church for the calling forth and edification of the church. The Holy Spirit uses the sermon's force to call and convict the hearer towards Christlikeness, resulting in salvation, sanctification, or edification. Linguistically, SAT teaches that illocutionary understanding can lead to perlocutionary effects upon the audience's feelings, thoughts, and actions. Illocutionary understanding is when the hearer understands the content and force (illocutionary success). Perlocutionary effects are the consequential effects caused by the hearer's understanding and response to the locutionary act and illocutionary act (illocutionary achievement). SAT provides a linguistic explanation to the theological conviction that preaching's Spirit-filled force can lead to Spirit-achieved transformation in the hearer.

SAT can deepen the understanding of sermonic communication. The linguistic theory accomplishes this by providing an action-based theory of spoken language, a

⁴⁶John Stott's portraits of the pastor are introduced in chapter two of the dissertation. In short, Stott provides five biblical portraits of the preacher. Four of the five deal with the preacher's handling of the Word of God: steward, herald, witness, and servant. John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961).

taxonomy of illocutionary acts and perlocutionary effects, and distinguishing between uttering, meaning, and effecting in communication. The discussion of SAT establishes the linguistic vocabulary and theory needed to explain and express the dissertation's biblical understanding of preaching and the preaching event. The objective is to provide a linguistic explanation of how God uses communication to accomplish His desires for biblical preaching. This dissertation's thesis is that SAT provides a linguistic theory and vocabulary to explain and express preaching's theological convictions. The product of SAT's explanation of preaching is a linguistic and theological definition of the preaching event: Biblical preaching is the Holy Spirit empowering and compelling the preacher to utter theocentric locutions in Spirit-filled illocutionary acts for perlocutionary effects of transformation.

Methodology

This dissertation is a biblical, theological, and linguistic explanation of the communication of preaching. The big picture of the dissertation shows that SAT explains the biblical and theological convictions of preaching. The explanation demands a clear and concise presentation of the biblical and theological convictions of preaching's oral communication. One determinant of this dissertation's effectiveness will be providing a biblical and theological survey of the God-given authority of preaching, the role of the Holy Spirit, the multi-faceted force of preaching, and the effects of preaching. The survey is necessary because one must understand preaching's biblical convictions before the linguistic explanation is given.

Once the reader understands the theological activity of preaching, the dissertation introduces the reader to SAT. Since many readers will have limited knowledge of SAT, this dissertation's effectiveness depends heavily on the presentation of SAT, including the theory's history, vocabulary, and concepts. One strategy to protect clarity is to use John Searle's work as the primary source for SAT. The dissertation

includes other contributors, but regarding vocabulary and concepts, the work of Searle is central. By the concluding chapter of the dissertation, the reader should be able to discuss the linguistic explanation of preaching.

Summary of Content

Chapter one serves as the introduction to the dissertation. The introduction lays a foundation of the biblical and theological convictions of preaching. The specific convictions covered are the four parties included in the preaching event: Bible, preacher, hearer, and Holy Spirit. The reader is also introduced to Heisler's concept of viewing preaching as a "trialogue." The chapter proceeds with a statement of the topic: a linguistic explanation of preaching's theological convictions. The introduction concludes by stating the thesis and methodology of the dissertation.

Chapter two presents the reader with a theology of preaching. This chapter defines and explains preaching by using Peter Adam's biblical foundations of preaching and then presenting a biblical understanding of the preacher's role, Holy Spirit's role, and the relationship between preaching and biblical spirituality. John Scott's biblical portraits of the preacher define the preacher's role as stewarding, heralding, witnessing, and serving the Word of God. Preaching is dependent on the Spirit's work upon the preacher (compulsion and unction) and the hearer (authentication, conviction, and application). The chapter unpacks the relationship between preaching and biblical spirituality as preaching is a spiritual gift that establishes and edifies the gathered audience's individual and corporate spirituality. The chapter concludes with a definition of preaching derived from the chapter's material and identifies four theological truths that SAT will explain and express.

Chapter three introduces the reader to SAT, including its history, brief overview, and meaning. The history section shows that SAT is a secular theory of spoken language that aims at identifying the force of spoken language. The theory attempts to

explain what the speaker is doing with what he is saying in three categories: locution, illocution, perlocution. Following the key terms of SAT, the chapter works through SAT's meaning, aim, and rules from John Searle's work. The chapters that follow utilize the theory in more detail and relation with preaching.

Chapter four examines the relationship between locutionary acts and preaching. The chapter presents the definition of a locutionary act and then works through the two separate aspects of the locutionary act: uttering and propositional content. The chapter shows that the speaker's goal of the locutionary act is uttering his or her propositional content. The chapter then examines how the locutionary act is accomplished in preaching, demonstrating that locutionary acts are theocentric—godly compulsion, empowerment, and content. God compels and empowers the preacher as he proclaims his propositional content that serves and aligns with the biblical text. The chapter surveys multiple homiletical methodologies showing the consistency of theocentric content.

Chapter five discusses the relationship between illocutionary acts and preaching. The chapter opens with a brief survey of NT terminology for preaching to establish that preaching is a dual event: declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ and calling the hearer to repentance and faith. The chapter's next goal is to equip the reader with the necessary understanding of illocutionary acts, including the definition, components, and aim of illocutionary acts. This section also discusses the Spirit's roles in illocutionary acts by using illocutionary components to demonstrate the Spirit's impact on the force of preaching. The chapter concludes with the taxonomy of illocutionary acts, providing examples of each in expository preaching. By the end of the chapter, the following inquiry is answered: How are assertions, commissives, expressives, and directives present in expository preaching? The chapter linguistically explains the "doing" of the sermon and how God works through the preacher as the preacher proclaims God's Word.

Chapter six moves from illocutionary acts to perlocutionary acts, which are the possible effects on the hearer following understanding. The chapter covers the definition, rules, and aim of perlocutionary acts, developing the specific vocabulary and theory of perlocutionary acts so that they can be applied to preaching. Before working through the taxonomy, the chapter discusses the Spirit's role in the perlocutionary act of developing Christlikeness in the hearer and presents a biblical survey of how people respond to NT preaching. Next, the chapter compares the taxonomy of perlocutionary acts (Gaines) and categories of biblical application (Chapell and Doriani), explaining the relationship between biblical goals of application and the capable achievements of spoken language. This chapter's primary goal is to show that spoken language is a more than sufficient vehicle for expository preaching to enhance the sermon's hearers' biblical spirituality.

Chapter seven serves as the conclusion of the dissertation. The conclusion shows that SAT provides a useful enhancement of a linguistic perspective of expository preaching. The chapter highlights how SAT can explain each party's role in the preaching event: Holy Spirit, Bible, preacher, and hearer. Moreover, the chapter provides a summary equation for the linguistic understanding of the preaching event: Biblical Preaching = Spirit-filled Illocutions (Theocentric Propositions) > Perlocutionary Transformation. The linguistic equation shows consistency with the essential terms of many definitions of expository preaching and shows that SAT has provided a linguistic explanation that aligns with expository preaching's theological and biblical convictions.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGY OF PREACHING

The nature and methodology of preaching are connected to one's theological convictions and answer the questions of how one preaches, why one preaches, and what one preaches. For this reason, Stott wrote, "The essential secret is not mastering certain techniques but being mastered by certain convictions. In other words, theology is more important than methodology. If our theology is right, then we have all the basic insights we need into what we ought to be doing, and all the incentives we need to induce us to do it faithfully."¹ Understanding the theological convictions behind any discussion of preaching is essential, but in this dissertation, establishing the theology of preaching is paramount to accomplish the thesis of using SAT to explain and express such convictions.

This chapter presents a theology of preaching using Peter Adam's three biblical foundations for preaching: God has spoken, it is written, and preach the word. Along with Adam's biblical foundations, the chapter covers three building blocks of preaching which are useful for later discussion: the preacher, Holy Spirit, biblical spirituality. The chapter's objectives are to determine what one preaches, why one preaches, the role of the preacher, the role of the Spirit, and the aim of preaching. This chapter serves as the source and the safeguard for the linguistic explanation of SAT in the preaching event.

¹John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (1982; repr., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 92.

Adam's Biblical Foundations of Preaching

Preaching shares its biblical foundations with every other ministry of the Word. Adam wrote, “The ministry of the Word in the Bible includes the writing and reading of Scripture, and the use of Scripture in personal exhortation and encouragement as well as in public teaching and preaching. Preaching is best understood as one part of the ministry of the Word, and it derives its theological character from the biblical basis for all aspects of the ministry of the Word.”² Any ministry of God’s Word is dependent on the existence of God, God revealing Himself, and God securing that revelation for all generations. Adam addresses these necessities under the headings: God has spoken, it is written, and preach the Word.

God Has Spoken

Adam’s first biblical foundation for the ministry of the Word is “that God has spoken, that his words remain powerful, and that without this historic revelation of God in words there can be no ministry of the Word.”³ Starting with God speaking is necessary because if humans can rightly claim to speak on God’s behalf, God must have first spoken for Himself. A ministry of God’s Word implies that God has spoken and supplied the words which the ministry studies, exposit, applies, and proclaims.

Adam supports his claim of a speaking God through three biblical cases: impotence of idols, humanity being made in the image of God, and the incarnation. First, Adam contrasted God’s ability to speak compared to the examples of the impotence of idols to speak in Psalm 115 and Isaiah 41. Second, using Genesis 1 and 2, he concludes, “God, the speaking God, makes humans in his own image and speaks to them. Our speech and hearing are a sign that God speaks and hears (Ps. 94:9-10).”⁴ Thirdly, the

²Peter Adam, *Speaking God’s Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2004), 15.

³Ibid., 15.

⁴Ibid., 17.

incarnation of Jesus Christ supports God speaking: Jesus, fully God and fully man, spoke with godly authority; Jesus obeyed the Word of God in perfect obedience; and Jesus taught His disciples to receive the Father's words as authoritative. Adam supported God speaking by using God's polemic against idols, God creating man in His image, and Jesus' incarnation.

Mohler identifies God speaking as a fundamental conviction of preaching. He wrote,

True preaching begins with this confession: We preach because God has spoken. That fundamental conviction is the fulcrum of the Christian faith and of Christian preaching. The Creator of the universe, the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Lord, chose His own sovereign will to reveal Himself to us. Supreme and complete in His holiness, needing nothing and hidden from our view, God condescended to speak to us and even to reveal Himself to us.⁵

The foundational belief that God has spoken to humanity, lower beings that He created, forms the bedrock of a theology of preaching.

Like Adam and Mohler, Stott began his theology of preaching with a conviction that God has spoken. Stott derived his argument from the biblical truth that God in His being is a revealing God. In reference to 1 John 1:5, he says, "In this case John's statement that God is light and contains no darkness means that he is open and not secretive, and that he delights to make himself known. We may say then that just as it is the nature of light to shine, so it is the nature of God to reveal himself."⁶ Rene Pache wrote, "The Lord, who is both light and love (I John 1:5; 4:8), takes pleasure in making Himself known to His creatures."⁷ Making Himself known is in God's nature.

⁵Albert Mohler Jr., *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 40.

⁶Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 93.

⁷René Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 27.

God has revealed himself through intervening actions and spoken interpretation of those interventions. Pache wrote, “He expresses His nature, His thoughts, His will and His plans. He explains His work, past and present; and He announces His future acts and His ultimate triumph.”⁸ Stott also emphasized the relationship between God’s acts and speech:

It is important to add that the speech of God was related to his activity: he took the trouble to explain what he was doing. Did he call Abraham from Ur? Then he spoke to him about his purpose and gave him the covenant of promise. Did he call the people of Israel out of their Egyptian slavery? Then he also commissioned Moses to teach them why he was doing it, namely to fulfil his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to confirm his covenant with them, to give them his laws, and to instruct them in his worship. Did he call the people out of the humiliation of their Babylonian exile? Then he also raised up prophets to explain the reasons why his judgement had fallen upon them, the conditions on which he would restore them, and the kind of people he wanted them to be. Did he send his Son to become man, to live and serve on Earth, to die, to rise, to reign and to pour out his Spirit? Then he also chose and equipped the apostles to see his works, hear his words, and bear witness to what they had seen and heard.⁹

Like every biblical ministry, God’s inward desire to provide a revelation of His acts and speech to lower beings makes preaching possible.

It Is Written

God preserving the record of His acts and speech is Adam’s second biblical foundation. Adam wrote, “This is the belief that in his revelation in history God also preserved his words for future generations. It is on this basis that our teaching and preaching are based on the Bible. On many occasions when God spoke, his intention was not only that his words would constitute revelation to the original audience, but that they would also serve as revelation for future generations.”¹⁰

⁸Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, 27.

⁹Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 95.

¹⁰Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 27.

Adam uses two descriptive words for the preservation of the Word of God: inscripturation and fixation. ‘Inscripturation’ describes the method that was either immediately or eventually employed to preserve the words for future generations, and ‘fixation’ describes the belief that God’s revelation is fixed or settled at a particular time for the future.¹¹ A ministry of the Word beyond the original audience would not be possible without God writing and preserving His interpreting speech of His intervening acts for future generations. Adam provides the examples of Abraham’s promises, the words of the Mosaic covenant, the explanation and instructions of the Passover, and the Law’s importance during the times of Josiah (2 Chr 34) and Ezra (Neh 8). These examples demonstrated how the original revelation continued to be significant for later generations through the inscripturation and fixation of God’s Word.

The NT’s reverence for God’s prior revelation shows a continuation of placing great importance on recorded revelation. Jesus Himself referred to the Old Testament (OT) as authoritative in His preaching, evident by His use of the phrases the law, the prophets, the commandment, and the Word of God. Similarly, New Testament (NT) writers accredited continual authority of prior revelation in their writings through their frequent uses of the phrases Scripture, the Scriptures, or it is written. The references to the OT by Jesus and the NT writers illustrate both the unity of the cumulative revelation and the importance of its preservation by inscripturation.¹² Adam cited B. B. Warfield’s conclusion, “B.B. Warfield can thus point to the interchangeable New Testament expression ‘it says,’ ‘Scripture says,’ and ‘God says,’ and refer to the ‘absolute

¹¹Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 27.

¹²*Ibid.*, 31.

identification by the [NT] writers of the Scriptures in their hands [the OT] with the living voice of God.”¹³

Adam used the term “cumulative,” borrowed from J. I. Packer, to label the previous revelation’s continual importance for God’s people.¹⁴ The term represented two conclusions of Adam’s survey: (1) original revelation had its original significance in its day and an even greater significance as it is passed from generation to generation, preserved by God; and (2) God is the preserver of the revelation and the one who decides which parts of his revelation will be preserved for future generations, and which parts are of value only to the original generation.¹⁵ Both the OT and NT approached and accepted God’s written revelation as authoritative and vital because it is God’s Word.

Preaching today is equally dependent on God’s preserving work as His initial intervening work. As Stott said,

For it is one thing to believe that ‘God has acted’, revealing himself in historical deeds of salvation, and supremely in the Word made flesh. It is another to believe that ‘God has spoken’, inspiring prophets and apostles to interpret his deeds. It is yet a third stage to believe that the divine speech, recording and explaining the divine activity, has been committed to writing. Yet only so could God’s particular revelation become universal, and what he did and said in Israel and in Christ be made available to all people in all ages and places. Thus the action, the speech and the writing belong together in the purpose of God.¹⁶

Stott identified three equally necessary beliefs for God’s revelation to be available for future generations: (1) God has revealed Himself in deed, (2) God has revealed Himself in speech, and (3) God has recorded His revelation in writing.

Along with preserving His revelation, God inspired the writing of His revelation. As defined in chapter one, inspiration is God’s sovereign act of recording

¹³Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 32.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁶Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 97.

divine revelation through a chosen man for His people. Packer defines inspiration as “a supernatural, providential influence of God’s Holy Spirit upon the human authors which caused them to write what He wished to be written for the communication of revealed truth to others.”¹⁷ To what extent did God inspire the Bible? The inspiration of God was plenary, entire and without restriction, and verbal, extending down to the words being used.¹⁸

The inspiration of God included the use of human authorship. Adam wrote, “God is the author of every part of Scripture through his Spirit, yet at the same time he did not exercise his authorship without involving human authors at every point.”¹⁹ Stott wrote,

Inspiration is not dictation. Instead he put his Word into human minds and human mouths in such a way that the thoughts they conceived and the words they spoke were simultaneously and completely theirs as well as his. Inspiration was not in any way incompatible with either their historical researches or the free use of their minds. It is essential, therefore, if we are to be true to the Bible’s own account of itself, to affirm its human as well as its divine authorship. Yet we must be careful to state the double authorship of the Bible (again, if we are to be true to the Bible’s own self-understanding) in such a way as to maintain both the divine and the human factors, without allowing either to detract from the other. On the one hand, the divine inspiration did not override the human authorship; on the other, the human authorship did not override the divine inspiration.²⁰

Inspiration involves dual authorship, by which God’s sovereign power worked through human authorship to produce precisely what God desired to say.

God’s inspiration establishes Scripture’s authority. Adam stated, “It means to recognize the authority of Scripture as being the authority of God himself in his words.”²¹

¹⁷J. I. Packer, “*Fundamentalism*” and the Word of God; *Some Evangelical Principles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1964), 77.

¹⁸Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, 72–73.

¹⁹Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 104.

²⁰Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 97.

²¹Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 105.

Pache wrote, “This authority is like that of Jesus Christ; it proceeds from its very nature. It is an immediate consequence of inspiration. If God entirely inspired Scripture (as we have seen that He did), then Scripture is vested with His authority.”²² Packer summarized the evangelical view of authority and the Word of God:

Its (evangelical view) basic principle is that the teaching of the written Scriptures is the Word which God spoke and speaks to His Church, and is finally authoritative for faith and life. To learn the mind of God, one must consult His written Word. What Scripture says, God says. The Bible is inspired in the sense of being word-for-word God-given. It is a record and explanation of divine revelation which is both complete (sufficient) and comprehensible (perspicuous); that is to say, it contains all that the Church needs to know in this world for its guidance in the way of salvation and service, and it contains the principles for its own interpretation within itself.²³

God’s inspiration establishes the transformative power of Scripture. God infuses his Word with his own spiritual power.²⁴ Chapell declared, “The Bible makes it clear that the Word is not merely powerful; it is without peer or dependence. The Word of God creates (Ps. 33:9), controls (Ps. 147:15-18), convicts (Jer. 23:28-29), performs his purposes (Isa. 55:10-11), and overrides human weakness (Phil. 1:18).”²⁵ The Word of God is inherently powerful due to its divine origin. Many biblical metaphors illustrate the Word’s power,

Many similes are used in the Bible to illustrate the powerful influence which God’s Word exerts. ‘The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword’ (Heb. 4:12), for it pierces both mind and conscience. Like a hammer it can break stony hearts, and like fire it can burn up rubbish. It illumines our path, shining like a lamp on a dark night, and like a mirror it shows us both what we are and what we should be. It is also likened to seed causing birth, and milk causing growth, to wheat which strengthens and honey which sweetens, and to gold which immeasurably enriches its possessor.²⁶

²²Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, 304–5.

²³Packer, “*Fundamentalism*” and the Word of God; *Some Evangelical Principles*, 47.

²⁴Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 26.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 27.

²⁶Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 105.

In summary, God has provided a preserved and inspired revelation for future generations. Scriptures' divine origin establishes its authority and transformative power. When the preacher proclaims God's Word through exposition and explanation, the preacher is delivering God's authority and power to the hearer.

Preach the Word

Adam's third biblical foundation for the ministry of the Word is God's commission to proclaim His written Word. That is to say, preaching depends not only on having a God-given source, the Bible, but also a God-given commission to preach, teach, and explain it to people and to encourage and urge them to respond.²⁷ God is the source of our preaching: he provided his words, spoken long ago and written down for us, and he has instructed his servants to preach and teach them to his people.²⁸ Therefore, the ministry of God's Word is a faithful response to God's initiating call. The biblical foundation of preaching does not end at affirmation of God's intervening acts and speech, nor the inscripturation and fixation of His written word, but rather, with the God-commanded act of proclamation.

Adam supported his third biblical foundation by showing that God has been commissioning His people to proclaim His Word throughout human history. He started with Moses and his calling to be God's mouthpiece to the Israelites in Exodus 4. Moses' ministry of the Word includes four categories: speaking for God, writing down the words of God, reading the words of God, and preaching the words of God. The preaching of Moses included three aspects: exposition, application, and exhortation. Adam wrote, "Moses' ministry of the Word is of great importance to our study, and he is the paradigm

²⁷Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 37.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 55.

prophet of the Bible (Deut 18:14-22). Indeed, it is possible to see Moses' ministry as the fountain of all OT ministry of the Word."²⁹

Ezra is another example of God's pattern of using His servants to speak for Him. During the Israelites' return from Babylonian exile, God called Ezra to speak on His behalf. Explaining Nehemiah 8, Adam wrote, "The ministry is that of the public reading of the law; the law is read to the assembly (it is a ministry to the congregation as a body); the ministry of the Levites is that of translating and interpreting the law (the public reading is followed by a leadership Bible study); and we have the first pulpit in the Bible, capable of supporting thirteen people!"³⁰ He concluded, "It is worth emphasizing the common elements that we are discovering in the OT ministry of the Word. These include the acceptance of the written or spoken Word as coming from God, the role of 'Scripture,' the place of public reading and explanation, encouragement to the right response, and the effect of the ministry on the people."³¹

The NT has the same pattern of God calling His servants to proclaim His Word in exposition, application, and exhortation. At the beginning of the NT, John the Baptist gives an exposition of Isaiah 40, followed by an application and exhortation to the crowds (Matt 3:1-12, Mark 1:1-8, Luke 3:1-20). The beginning of Jesus' preaching ministry, Mark 1:15, laid a foundation of exposition and application, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" In these words Jesus summarizes the OT as his 'text' (the 'time,' the 'kingdom'), and applies it to his hearers, exhorting them to respond ('repent, and believe').³² In Luke 4:16-21, Jesus explains and applies Isaiah 61 in the synagogue. Adam summarized Jesus'

²⁹Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 40.

³⁰Ibid., 41.

³¹Ibid., 41.

³²Ibid., 45.

preaching, “By his preaching and teaching he both announced and extended the kingdom, called people to faith, refuted error, rebuked those who taught error, encouraged the weak, trained his disciples, explained the Scripture, rebuked sinners and summoned all to faith and obedience.”³³

Jesus’ discipleship included commissioning the task of proclaiming the good news. Jesus sent his disciples out to proclaim the good news of the kingdom in Luke 9 and 10. In His high priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus prays for the disciples as they are sent into the world as Jesus Himself was sent into the world. Before ascending to the right hand of God, Jesus commissioned the disciples to make disciples of all nations in the Great Commission of Matthew 28 and to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth in Acts 1. The preaching ministry and discipleship of Jesus support the pattern of God calling His servants to proclaim His Word.

The preaching of Peter and Paul in the book of Acts shows a commitment to explanation, application, and exhortation. Adam wrote about Peter’s sermon in Acts 2: “The content is the interpretation of OT Scripture and the story of Jesus; the application is ‘Repent, and be baptized’; the sermon ends with exhortation, warning and pleading; and its result is that about 3,000 welcomed Peter’s message and were baptized and added to the number of disciples.”³⁴ Peter’s ministry of the Word includes an *exegesis* of the OT (Joel and Psalms), an *application* to his hearers, and also an *appeal* encouraging them to act in response to the Word of God which they heard proclaimed.³⁵

Paul’s sermon in Acts 13 contains the narratives of the exodus and King David, the interpretation that Jesus is the promised Savior, application for the forgiveness of sins through Jesus, and exhortation to avoid being the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy

³³Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 47.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 49.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 78.

of unbelief. In a similar manner to Peter's ministry of the Word, Paul's included an *exegesis* of the OT (Exod, 1 Sam, Pss, and Isa), an *application* to his hearers, and an *appeal* encouraging them to act in response to the Word of God which they heard proclaimed.

From the calling of Moses to the preaching in Acts, numerous examples exist of God accomplishing His purposes through human proclamation of explanation, application, and exhortation. Adam provided the following implication of God calling servants to proclaim:

God has appointed the ministry of the Word. Human servants are God's main means for making his words known. Preachers are not an intrusion, nor are they unnecessary in an obedient church; they are God's method of bringing his words to Christian and non-Christian alike.³⁶

Ministry of the Word, explicitly preaching, is not an option for God's people, or a church-created strategy, or a preference for the church; instead, the proclamation of God's Word is a mandated act by God to His servants. Mohler agrees that preaching is obedience to God's command and revealed will for the church,

Preach the Word! That simple imperative frames the act of preaching as an act of obedience, and that is where any theology of preaching must begin. Preaching did not emerge from the church's experimentation with communication techniques. The church does not preach because preaching is thought to be a good idea or an effective technique. The sermon has not earned its place in Christian worship by providing its utility in comparison with other means of communication or aspects of worship. Rather, we preach because we have been commanded to preach. A theology of preaching begins with the humble acknowledgment that preaching is not a human invention but a gracious creation of God and a central part of His revealed will for the church.³⁷

Summary of Biblical Foundations

The ministry of God's Word is a theological task with a biblical foundation of three essential beliefs: God has revealed himself through acts and speech, God has

³⁶Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 56.

³⁷Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 39.

preserved his original revelation through inscripturation for future generations, and God's people are commissioned to declare His Word. Without God revealing himself, there would be no understanding of God. Without God preserving his original revelation through writing, future generations would not know God's great acts and speech. Without God commissioning his people to proclaim his revelation, there would not be a ministry of God's revelation. God did reveal himself, God did record it, and God did send his people to proclaim; therefore, there is a ministry of God's Word.

Without these foundational beliefs, preaching becomes something other than a biblically-warranted mandate. Mohler includes God speaking, God's Word, and God's commission in his convictions concerning preaching:

All Christian preaching springs from the truth that God has spoken in word and deed, and that He has chosen human vessels to bear witness to Himself and His gospel. We speak because we cannot be silent. We speak because God has spoken.

The preacher is a commissioned agent whose task is to speak because God has spoken, because the preacher has been entrusted with the telling of the gospel of the Son who saves, and because God has promised the power of the Spirit as the seal and efficacy of the preacher's calling. The ground of the preaching is none other than the revelation that God has addressed to us in Scripture. The goal of preaching is no more and no less than faithfulness to this calling. The glory of preaching is that God has promised to use preachers and preaching to accomplish His purpose and bring glory unto Himself.³⁸

Stott parallels Adam's three biblical foundations for the doctrine of preaching,

Such is the theological foundation for the ministry of preaching. God is light; God has acted; God has spoken; and God has caused his action and speech to be preserved in writing. Through this written Word he continues to speak with a living voice powerfully. And the Church needs to listen attentively to his Word, since its health and maturity depend upon it. So pastors must expound it; it is to this they have been called. Whenever they do so with integrity, the voice of God is heard, and the Church is convicted and humbled, restored and reinvigorated, and transformed into an instrument for his use and glory.³⁹

³⁸Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 42, 48.

³⁹Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 133.

Building Blocks of a Theology of Preaching

It is necessary to build upon Adam's foundation by addressing three areas that tremendously shape the preaching event: the role of the preacher, the work of the Spirit, and the relationship between preaching and biblical spirituality. Examining these areas establish the duality of preaching's communication, the indirect authority of the preacher, the multi-faceted work of the Spirit, and the aim of establishing biblical spirituality and edifying believers through preaching. In a similar manner to Adam's foundation for the ministry of God's Word, these areas form the foundation for the preaching event.

The Preacher's Role in Preaching

One building block in preaching is the role of the preacher in the dual-communication of preaching. Since the authority of preaching is not grounded in the preacher, rather in God, how does the preacher mediate God's authority? Stott provided an answer to this question with his four roles of a preacher's handling of the Word of God: steward, herald, witness, and servant.⁴⁰ These portraits help explain the preacher's mediation of God's authority that not only occur from sermon to sermon but also within each sermon.

Stott depicts the preacher as "a steward of God's mysteries, that is, of the self-revelation which God has entrusted to men and which is now preserved in the Scriptures."⁴¹ The word "steward" means the preacher is a trustee and dispenser of another's goods, specifically the Scriptures. Stott elaborated, "The Christian preacher's message, therefore, is derived not directly from the mouth of God, as if he were a prophet or apostle, nor from his own mind, like the false prophets, nor undigested from the minds

⁴⁰John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961). See also Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul on Preaching* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), chap. 2.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 17.

and mouths of other men, like the babbler, but from the once revealed and now recorded Word of God, of which he is a privileged steward.”⁴²

The Bible depicts the preacher as a herald of God. Heralds are vested with public authority from the king or state to declare the official message of the king or state. The idea is when the herald speaks, “the voice of the king is heard.”⁴³ Being a herald conjures the image “of a crowd of citizens gathering in a distant ancient village to hear from the king through the proclamation of his royal spokesman.”⁴⁴ Dr. Lloyd-Jones wrote: “An ambassador is not a man who voices his own thoughts or his own opinions or views, or his own desires. The very essence of the position of the ambassador is that he is a man who has been ‘sent’ to speak to somebody else. He is the bearer of a message, he is commissioned to do this, he is sent to do this, and that is what he must do.”⁴⁵

The Bible also depicts the preacher as a witness who has the privilege to “testify to and for Jesus Christ, defending Him, commending Him, bringing before the court evidence which they must hear and consider before they return with their verdict.”⁴⁶ The preacher testifies to the validity and power of God’s Word before the world in a similar manner as the testimony of a witness in a court setting. Stott emphasizes that the preacher is not bearing witness alone but rather from God to Christ through the Spirit:

But Christian witness is not just witness to Christ. It is also, and fundamentally, a witness borne to Him by the Father through the Spirit. I do not mean to imply that our human witness is either unnecessary or unimportant. But on the other hand, let us see it in perspective, and we shall then be less inclined to conceit. Witness to Jesus Christ before the world does not finally depend on us; it is a mighty testimony initiated by the Father and continued through the Spirit. And if the Spirit uses the

⁴²Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait*, 17.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 35.

⁴⁴Michael Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 7.

⁴⁵David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 71.

⁴⁶Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait*, 61.

Church as the means through which His witness is chiefly exercised, the credit is due to the Spirit not the Church.⁴⁷

The fourth depiction of the preacher presented by Stott is servanthood. After providing a word study of the Greek word *diakonos*, Stott explains that a servant is the “representative of a higher authority whose commission and command he is fulfilling” and “is acting in his master’s name, and thus his master is acting through him.”⁴⁸ The preacher is acting under the authority and through the authority of his master, God, who empowers the preacher’s service through His Word, the cross of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit. The power and prestige of the preaching office are not grounded in the man but rather the position of the preacher as the servant of the Most High God.

Stott portrays the preacher fulfilling his commissioned task from God by stewarding, heralding, testifying, and serving the Word of God through the power of the Spirit. The main thread throughout Stott’s portraits is the proclamation of God’s Word. The steward is faithful by dispensing the Word in God’s household. The herald is faithful by publicly proclaiming the Word to the world. The witness is faithful by testifying truthfully to the Scriptures on Christ’s behalf before the jury of the lost and saved. Moreover, the servant is faithful by laboring for the master by sowing and watering God’s seed, the Word of God. Adam wrote, “God is the source of our preaching: he provided his words, spoken long ago and written down for us, and he has instructed his servants to preach and teach them to his people.”⁴⁹

One implication of Stott’s portraits is that authority does not dwell in the preacher but rather the preacher’s role as God’s herald, witness, servant, and steward.

⁴⁷Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait*, 79.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁹Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 55.

The preacher is granted authority by God through the Spirit to speak with authority.⁵⁰ As Carson explains,

Authority is integral to the notion of what preaching is; namely, it is clear, human utterance of God's message. Its authority is bound up with the fact that this is God's message. Preaching that does not display divine authority both in its content and in its manner is thus profoundly inadequate.⁵¹

Fabarez locates preaching's authority in the fact that preaching is expressing God's message:

Regardless of the culture climate, good biblical preaching is always intrinsically authoritative. As John Calvin rightly pointed out, 'The office of teaching is committed to pastors for no other purpose than that God alone may be heard there.' If God's thoughts, standards, and expectations are clearly expressed in a sermon, it inherently possesses His authority. When the Creator's voice is heard among the created, it commands respect. When the Judge of the living and the dead has His mind articulated He should not vie with any earthly information for our attention.

Real pulpit authority comes from accurately presenting God's mind on the matter, not our own.

If God's voice is to be heard, God's Word must be the focal point. If you prominently display God's message in your sermons, His authority will permeate every point.⁵²

J. I. Packer identifies the authority of preaching with correctly handling and proclaiming God's Word:

⁵⁰Fabarez's conclusion that preaching is an authoritative communication to God's people on behalf of God was a result of his study of the main Greek words used for preaching in NT: "The word *kerysso*, *euangelizo*, *katangelo*, *anangelo* and *didasko*, along with a host of other New Testament words, all add to our understanding of the powerful, authoritative, and life-changing oration the preacher is called to deliver to God's people." Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 8. Vines and Shaddix state the authority of preacher as "one who proclaims the message of the King of Kings to men. The preaching event, then, was accompanied by an atmosphere of seriousness, authority, and divine mandate." Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 18. Greidanus deems divine authority as the only authority for preaching: "The only proper authority for preaching is divine authority—the authority of God's heralds, his ambassadors, his agents. Heralds and ambassadors, we have seen, do not speak their own word but that of their sender. Contemporary preachers, similarly, if they wish to speak with divine authority, must speak not their own word but that of their Sender." Sidney Greidanus, *Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 12.

⁵¹D. A. Carson, *The Primacy of Expository Preaching Part 1*, recorded on January 30, 1995, pt. 21:37-22:13, accessed January 23, 2021, www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-primacy-of-expository-preaching-part-1.

⁵²Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 128, 130, 135.

Preaching is marked by authority when the message is a relaying of what is taught by the text, when active response to it is actively sought, when it is angled in a practical, applicatory way that involves the listener's lives, and when God himself is encountered through it.

It is those under authority who have authority; it is those whose demeanor models submission to the Scriptures and dependence on the Lord of the Word who mediate the experience of God's authority in preaching.⁵³

Holy Spirit and Preaching

Another building block in preaching is the Holy Spirit. A biblical theology of preaching must take the role of the Spirit into full view, for without an understanding of the work of the Spirit, the task of preaching is robbed of its balance and power.⁵⁴ The Spirit is the active agent in preaching who empowers preaching by bringing together inspiration and illumination, understanding and conviction, preparation and delivering of the sermon, and bold proclamation and quiet confirmation. Heisler's definition of expository preaching highlights the abundant presence of the Spirit in preaching:

Expository preaching is the Spirit-empowered proclamation of biblical truth derived from the illuminating guidance of the Holy Spirit by means of a verse-by-verse exposition of the Spirit-inspired text, with a view to applying the text by means of the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, first to the preacher's own heart, and then to the hearts of those who hear, culminating in an authentic and powerful witness to the living Word, Jesus Christ, and obedient, Spirit-filled living.⁵⁵

Heisler's definition identifies the Spirit as responsible for empowering, illuminating, inspiring, convicting, authenticating, and applying. The work of the Spirit began when the Spirit provided the source of preaching, the inspired Word of God. The work of inspiration is "a completed process that guaranteed the truthfulness of the Bible by the Spirit's superintending of the revelation we have recorded in Scripture."⁵⁶ The

⁵³J. I. Packer, "Authority in Preaching," in *The Gospel in the Modern World: A Tribute to John Stott*, ed. Martyn Eden and David Wells (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), 208, 210.

⁵⁴Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 45.

⁵⁵Greg Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2007), 21.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 41.

preacher approaches and studies the inspired Scripture to mine God's authority, power, and wisdom. Every other activity of the Spirit in preaching is dependent on the foundation of inspiration: the Spirit illuminates the inspired text, the Spirit empowers the proclamation of the inspired text, the Spirit authenticates the inspired text, the Spirit convicts the heart with the inspired text, and the Spirit applies the inspired text to produce godliness.

While inspiration is the completed work of the Spirit, illumination is the ongoing work of the Spirit. Inspiration and illumination are part of the total package of God's revelation to us and must be embraced as a powerful combination.⁵⁷ Adam cautioned, "Personal illumination is no substitute for verbal inspiration; the words are the revelation, not just a witness to the revelation; the Bible's words are not 'one step removed' from revelation, they are the revelation."⁵⁸ Illumination does not replace or compete against inspiration; instead, illumination is "the process whereby the Holy Spirit so impresses, convinces, and convicts the believer as to the truthfulness and significance of the author's intended meaning in the text that a change in action, attitude, or belief occurs, resulting in a more transformed, Spirit-filled life."⁵⁹

Illumination is necessary for the preacher and the hearer to understand the Word of God.⁶⁰ Heisler wrote, "The Spirit's illumination is the guide to [the Spirit's] inspiration, and we desperately need his guidance into truth because we are sinful, fallen, and fallible human beings."⁶¹ Stott expresses the inability of a man to understand God:

⁵⁷Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 40.

⁵⁸Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 96.

⁵⁹Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 43-44.

⁶⁰Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 45.

⁶¹Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 41.

By ourselves we are blind to God's truth and deaf to his voice. Lame, we cannot walk in his ways. Dumb, we can neither sing to him nor speak for him. We are even dead in our trespasses and sins. Moreover, we are the dupes and slaves of demonic forces. But if human beings are in reality spiritually and morally blind, deaf, dumb, lame and even dead, not to mention the prisoners of Satan, then it is ridiculous in the extreme to suppose that by ourselves and our merely human preaching we can reach or rescue people in such a plight.⁶²

Preaching is dependent on the Spirit's guidance and illumination of God's Word so that sinful and fallible humanity can comprehend the Word, write sermons from the Word, and understand the preaching of the Word.

The Spirit empowers the preacher of God's Word with compulsion and unction. York wrote, "The power we want is that which can only be attributed to the Holy Spirit as he grips our hearts with the Word and compels us to preach to others the truth that has so captivated us."⁶³ Beyond compelling the preacher to proclaim the Word, the empowerment of Spirit provides unction to the preacher. Unction is "the Holy Spirit falling upon the preacher in a special manner. It is an access of power. It is God giving power, and enabling, through the Spirit, to the preacher in order that he may do this work in a manner that lifts it up beyond the efforts and endeavors of a man to a position in which the preacher is being used by the Spirit and becomes the channel through whom the Spirit works."⁶⁴

Unction is received from the Spirit, not produced by man's efforts. York wrote, "The power of the Holy Spirit cannot be manufactured. We do not offer a recipe for spiritual power that comes when we follow steps A, B, and C. Spiritual power comes only when we saturate ourselves with the Word, surrender ourselves to God's will, and

⁶²Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 329.

⁶³Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 7-8.

⁶⁴Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 322. See also Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), chap. 7.

discipline ourselves in God's way."⁶⁵ He concluded, "Although we cannot take credit for the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, we can usually take the blame for his absence."⁶⁶

The Spirit works upon the hearer to bring about authentication, conviction, and application. Heisler, in *Spirit-led Preaching*, credits the Spirit for such works:

The Spirit of God takes the preached Word of God and pierces the human heart with conviction so that an unmistakable hearing from God takes place in the life of the listener.

Paul stated that his preaching was 'a demonstration of the Spirit's power.' The Greek word for demonstration (apodeixis) occurs only in 1 Corinthians 2:4 and carries the idea of providing proof. In Paul's theology of preaching, the Holy Spirit's unseen dynamic at work in the preacher and the hearers is the 'proof' or confirmation that God's Word is powerful, active, and living. Just as the Spirit testifies to our salvation (Rom. 8:16), the Spirit also testifies or 'proves' to our listeners that we are preaching the Word of God and that they are hearing the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is the divine communicator. He inspires the Word, illumines the Word, and authenticates the Word.

Jesus taught his disciples about the 'proofing' or 'confirming' ministry of the Holy Spirit when he said in John 16:13, 'But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.' Hence, Paul's preaching is powerful because it carries the divine confirmation, the divine 'proof,' given by means of the Holy Spirit's inward authentication. The Spirit's authentication is the inward burning conviction produced by the Spirit that affirms what is being said is indeed true and demands obedience. When preachers and teachers refer to the Holy Spirit as the sacred communicator, they are referring to the Holy Spirit placing his seal of approval on the message being preached. Powerful preaching happens when the audience hears the preacher's audible voice proclaiming the Word as the Spirit's internal voice authenticates the Word so that people leave asking, 'were not our hearts burning within us while he...opened the Scriptures to us?' (Luke 24:32).

The Spirit's internal witness to biblical truth causes us to give unwavering assent to its truthfulness and puts a desire in our heart to submit to it.⁶⁷

The work of the Spirit is an internal witness to the truthfulness, demand, and transformative power of Scripture; as a result, the hearer experiences a work of God through God's human instrument.

⁶⁵York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 8.

⁶⁶Ibid., 8.

⁶⁷Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 22, 32-33, 56.

Preaching is a dual-communicator event in which the preacher is proclaiming to the ear while the Spirit is communicating to the mind, heart, and will of man. The work of the Spirit makes the preaching event a real and present encounter with God for the hearer through the proclamation of the inspired Word of God. Using 1 Corinthians 2 and 1 Thessalonians 1, Lloyd-Jones wrote, “True preaching, after all, is God acting. It is not just a man uttering words; it is God using him. He is being used of God. He is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁸

Biblical Spirituality and Preaching

Another building block of preaching is the relationship between preaching and biblical spirituality. Biblical spirituality leans heavily on the doctrine of union with Christ.⁶⁹ Union with Christ is the position the believer has in Christ and the believer’s progression towards Christlikeness. J. V. Fesko wrote, “every aspect of our redemption is coordinated with union with Christ: election (Eph 1:4), effectual calling (1 Pet 5:10), faith (1 Cor 1:2), justification (Rom 8:1), adoption (Gal 3:26), sanctification (John 15:5), perseverance (John 15:6a), and glorification (2 Cor 5:17a).⁷⁰

To establish biblical spirituality and to edify believers, God gave spiritual gifts to the local church. Among spiritual gifts are the gifts of teaching and preaching. In 1 Timothy 4:13-14, Paul connected Timothy’s charge to preach as faithfulness to his God-given gift: “give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you.” In Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul identified pastors

⁶⁸Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 108.

⁶⁹See Glen G. Scorgie et al., eds., *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 812–14; Joel R. Beeke, *Puritan Reformed Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004), 3–4, 44; Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), chap. 8; and Robert A Peterson, *Salvation Applied by the Spirit: Union with Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

⁷⁰J. V. Fesko, “Sanctification and Union with Christ: A Reformed Perspective,” *Evangelical Quarterly*, July 1, 2010, 198.

and teachers as gifts to the church for the building up of the church: “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.”

As a spiritual gift, preaching desires for the hearer to be saved and sanctified through Jesus Christ.⁷¹ York wrote, “The preacher ultimately desires to confront his hearers with the claims of the text, so that their lives are conformed to the image of Christ.”⁷² Joel Beeke wrote of preaching, “With the Spirit’s blessing, its mission is to transform the believer in all that he is and does so that he becomes more and more like the Savior.”⁷³ Mark Dever wrote, “The Holy Spirit uses the preached word to give spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead, and He uses the preached word to conform God’s people more closely to the image of Jesus.”⁷⁴ God uses the spiritual gift of preaching to accomplish His desire for His people to be conformed to His Son, Jesus Christ.

The spiritual gift of preaching impacts spirituality by proclaiming the full scope of union with Christ—from initial trusting of Christ for justification to continual trusting of Christ for sanctification. Fesko wrote, “Our union with Christ is brought

⁷¹God’s desire for his people to be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ, is demonstrated using Pauline literature. Paul tells the Ephesians (Eph 4:13-15), “until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ...but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.” Paul also tells the Romans (Rom 8:29), “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.” Paul also tells the Colossians (Col 1:28), “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.” The goal of spirituality and preaching is for the hearer to be found in Christ and to become conformed to Christ.

⁷²Hershael W. York and Scott A. Blue, “Is Application Necessary in the Expository Sermon,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3, no. 2 (June 1, 1999): 74.

⁷³Beeke, *Puritan Reformed Spirituality*, 427.

⁷⁴Mark Dever, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice*, IX Marks (Nashville: B & H Books, 2012), 60.

about, as Paul says (Rom 10:14-15), through the preaching of the word. We are not only brought from death to life by the preached word but are also spiritually nourished throughout our life-long process of sanctification.”⁷⁵ Fesko summarized Edmund Clowney, “God speaks to his people by the men who have been specifically gifted by the Holy Spirit to herald the κήρυγμα, the performative word of God that goes forth in the midst of the communion of the saints and raises people from death to life, clothes them in the righteousness of Christ, nourishes them with the true bread from heaven, and further conforms them to the image of Christ in sanctification.”⁷⁶ Lawson emphasizes how preaching for change impacts the entire sermon, “We preach for effect. In everything—from the way we introduce our sermons, to the way we illustrate our points, to the way we bring everything down to the conclusion—we preach with the goal of spurring believers on in their maturity in Christ and of awakening nonbelievers to their need for a Savior.”⁷⁷

Preaching impacts the listeners’ spirituality through the mind, heart, and will of the listener. With the mind, one understands and comprehends. With the heart, one loves or hates. With the will, one promotes or discourages. The demand on preaching is more than informing the mind, as Lawson said, “Preaching must do more than simply inform the mind; it also must grip the heart and challenge the will. The entire person—mind, emotion, and will—must be impacted. Thus exposition is not merely for the transmitting of information; it is for the effecting of transformation.”⁷⁸ Effective

⁷⁵J. V. Fesko, “Preaching as a Means of Grace and the Doctrine of Sanctification: A Reformed Perspective,” *American Theological Inquiry*, January 15, 2010.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 35.

⁷⁷Steven J. Lawson, “The Passion of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of 1 Timothy 4:13-16,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159, no. 633 (January 1, 2002): 86.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 86. Daniel Overdorf also emphasized that preaching aims for more than informing, “Effective preaching, stated simply, has an effect. It makes a difference. It changes hearts. It influences decisions. It equips servants. It spurs obedience. Effective preaching unleashes the Word, not only to inform, but also to transform.” Daniel Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon: How to Balance Biblical Integrity and Cultural Relevance* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 20.

preaching aims to conform the entire spirituality of the gathered audience to the image of Christ by the dual-communication (preacher and Spirit) of the Word of God.

To summarize this section, biblical preaching is an avenue that God uses to bring about spiritual transformation by applying the preached Word to the hearer's heart, mind, and will. Dever wrote, "Christian preaching seeks change. It cuts against the grain of surrounding culture, it challenges presuppositions, it convicts of sin, and it calls people to put their faith in Jesus Christ."⁷⁹ Gary Millar provides an excellent elaboration on creating change through preaching:

When you listen to someone explain the Bible, what do you want to get out of it? I want to know that God has addressed me through his word. I want to be challenged, humbled, corrected, excited, moved, strengthened, overawed, corrected, shaped, stretched and propelled out into the world as a different person. I want to be changed! And if I'm the one who's teaching the Bible—whether it's to my children, to our students in college, to our church family in Brisbane, or to anybody else—I long for that change to happen in the hearts of those who hear. I long for Jane to find new security in Christ, and for Rob to discover real joy in following Jesus. I want Ian to stop doing that because he realized it is dishonoring God, and I want everyone to be bowled over by the power and beauty of God. I want people (myself included) to become more like Christ. To borrow Edward's language, I want people to be affected. I want to preach in a way that results in change. Real change. Heart change.⁸⁰

Conclusion

Preaching is a spiritual gift built on the foundation of God calling His servants to proclaim His recorded revelation of His acts and speech. Preaching shares with all ministries of God's Word Adam's three biblical foundations: God has spoken (existence of God), it is written (God's revelation), and preach the Word (God securing His revelations for all generations). God has commissioned His people to preach the written and secured revelation of His acts and speech. Preachers faithfully answer this commission to preach by stewarding, heralding, testifying to, and serving the Word of

⁷⁹Dever, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice*, 15.

⁸⁰Gary Millar and Phil Campbell, *Saving Eutychus: How to Preach God's Word and Keep People Awake* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2013), 27.

God. All of these pastoral responsibilities emphasize the handling and proclamation of God's Word so that the sermon has the authority of God.

Biblical preaching aims to transform the spirituality of the gathered audience through salvation and sanctification in Christ Jesus. The transformation is a product of the hearer's belief in the dual-communication, preacher and Spirit, of the Scriptures. Spiritual transformation impacts one's mind (understanding and comprehension), heart (what one loves or hates), and will (how one uses their time and energy). The Spirit is involved with the power, illumination, conviction, authentication, and application of preaching's oral communication.

The burden now shifts to SAT and its ability to linguistically explain and express the following theological truths about the preaching event: the centrality of the Word of God in the communication of preaching, the mediating of God's authority through the preacher's stewarding, heralding, witnessing, and serving the Word of God, the empowerment (authentication, conviction, and application) of the Spirit in the preacher's proclamation, and the possibility of God-empowered effects on the spirituality of the audience.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO SPEECH ACT THEORY

What are the similarities and differences between the following five sentences?

1. Jesus Christ has come again.
2. Jesus Christ, come again! (God speaking)
3. I, Jesus Christ, will come again.
4. Oh! Jesus Christ has come again!
5. Jesus Christ hereby comes again. (God speaking; at this utterance, Jesus Christ returns.)¹

All five sentences are true and refer to “Jesus Christ” with the predication of “come again.” The difference is each one is accomplishing a different intention of the speaker: (1) asserting, (2) commanding, (3) promising, (4) expressing, and (5) declaring. On the one hand, the spoken utterances (“Jesus Christ” and “come again”) are identical; on the other hand, the intentions (assertion, command, promise, expression, and declaration) are all distinct. This example illustrates J. L. Austin’s speech theory’s central thesis, that saying is more than descriptive speech; it is also doing.² SAT is a sub-discipline in the philosophy of language that argues that language has a performative aspect.

This chapter provides an introduction to SAT’s history, terminology, and concepts. The history focuses on two theorists: J. L. Austin and John Searle. The terminology section presents the definition of all three parts of a speech act: locution, illocution, and perlocution. The chapter continues with an explanation of the aim of illocutionary acts, rules of language, and sentence meaning. The chapter shows that SAT is a theory of language that highlights the performative aspect of speech.

¹Gregg Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” *Theological Research Exchange Network*, no. ETS-4542 (November 19, 1993): 11.

²J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 222.

History of Speech Act Theory: Austin and Searle

Although there are hints of SAT in earlier philosophers as different as Avicenna and Hobbes, the first to study the issue explicitly and at length was John Langshaw Austin.³ He was an Oxford professor who laid the foundations of SAT before his death in 1960 at age forty-nine.⁴ Austin's 1955 William James Lectures at Harvard, now published in the book *How to Do Things with Words*, are the primary source for SAT. Austin was initially motivated to explore the nature of performative utterances as part of a project to refute the theory of meaning championed by the logical positivists, primarily during the 1920s and 1930s.⁵ He dialectically argues with logical positivism throughout his work: "It was for too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a 'statement' can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs, or to 'state some fact,' which it must do either truly or falsely."⁶

Austin's central thesis is that to *say* something is to *do* something. Early in his William James Lectures, he identified some utterances to be performatives. The name is derived, of course, from 'perform,' the usual verb with the noun 'action': it indicates that

³A. P. Martinich, ed., *The Philosophy of Language*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 103. Allison wrote, "Although the distinction had been made philosophy of language between *constatives*, or utterances which state something, and *performatives*, or utterances which do something other than stating, it was not until J. L. Austin presented the 1955 William James Lectures at Harvard University that this distinction was parlayed into a formal theory of speech acts." Allison, "Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture," 2.

⁴Hugh C. White, "Introduction: Speech Act Theory and Literary Criticism." *Semeia*, January 1, 1988, 1. Millard Erickson credits Austin with SAT's beginnings, "The third stage of the twentieth-century philosophical treatment of the meaning of language, speech-act theory, owes its genesis to John Austin. He began by questioning the long-standing assumption in philosophy that to say something, at least in all cases worth considering, is to *state* something." Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 153-154.

⁵Stephen Levinson identifies the main tenet of logical positivism as "unless a sentence can, at least in principle, be *verified* (i.e. tested for its truth or falsity), it was strictly speaking *meaningless*. Of course it followed that most ethical, aesthetic and literary discourses, not to mention most everyday utterances, were simply meaningless." Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 227.

⁶John L. Austin and James O. Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, 2nd ed. (1962; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 1.

the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action—it is not normally thought of as just saying something.⁷ Performatives, when spoken with the appropriate circumstances with right intentions, are utterances that do more than stating the truth.⁸ The speaker becomes a doer.⁹ Austin illustrates the actions of performatives with the following examples:

Suppose, for example, that in the course of a marriage ceremony I say, as people will, ‘I do’—(s.c. take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife). Or again, suppose that I tread on your toe and say ‘I apologize.’ Or again, suppose that I have the bottle of champagne in my hand and say ‘I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth.’ Or suppose I say ‘I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow.’ In all these cases it would be absurd to regard the thing that I say as a report of the performance of the action which is undoubtedly done—the action of betting, or christening, or apologizing. Now, these kinds of utterances are the ones that we call performative utterances.¹⁰

Austin identified a fundamental trichotomy in spoken language: locution, illocution, and perlocution.¹¹ He teaches the trichotomy by highlighting the three distinct acts in the sentence, “Shoot her!”:

(E. I)

Act (A) or Locution

He said to me ‘Shoot her!’ meaning by ‘shoot’ shoot and referring by ‘her’ to *her*.

Act (B) or Illocution

He urged (or advised, ordered, &c.) me to shoot her.

Act (C.a.) or Perlocution

He persuaded me to shoot her.

Act (C.b.)

He got me to (or made me, &c.) shoot her.¹²

⁷Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 6–7.

⁸Austin demonstrates the performative aspect of speech: “In these examples (the utterances: ‘I do,’ ‘I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth,’ and ‘I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow’) it seems clear that to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it.” Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 6.

⁹Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 209.

¹⁰Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, 222.

¹¹Sadock, *Toward a Linguistic Theory of Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press 1974), 8.

¹²Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 101–2.

He prioritized distinguishing the three aspects of a speech act in his Harvard lectures:

We first distinguished a group of things we do in saying something, which together we summed up by saying we perform a *locutionary act*, which is roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to ‘meaning’ in the traditional sense. Second, we said that we also perform *illocutionary acts* such as informing, ordering, warning, undertaking, &c., i.e., utterances which have a certain (conventional) force. Thirdly, we may also perform *perlocutionary acts*: what we bring about or achieve by saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even, say, surprising or misleading.¹³

He also provided a concise summary of all three aspects towards the end of his lectures:

Thus we distinguished the locutionary act (and within it the phonetic, the phatic, and the rhetic acts) which has a meaning; the illocutionary act which has a certain force in saying something; the perlocutionary act which is the achieving of certain effects by saying something.¹⁴

Austin’s work is foundational for SAT because it opened the discussion concerning the *doing* of speech, identified the three aspects of a speech act, and established criteria for a successful speech act.¹⁵

The foundation laid by Austin was built upon by his student, John Searle.¹⁶ To quote Kevin Vanhoozer, “If Austin is the Luther of speech act philosophy, John Searle may be considered its Melancthon—its systematic theologian.”¹⁷ Searle’s book, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, is a continuation and necessary

¹³Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 109; *italics mine*.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁵Allison identified three main contributions that Austin made in SAT: (1) Austin’s seminal ideas were important in exploding the myth that all one essentially does in saying something is state something. (2) Another of Austin’s key contributions was his recognition that a speech act is composed of three aspects (locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary). (3) Austin was also instrumental in setting forth the conditions for a successful speech act, conditions which (in most cases) go beyond the evaluative criterion of true/false to include such ‘infelicities.’ Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications,” 3.

¹⁶Searle’s contributions to SAT can be found in the following works: John R. Searle, “Meaning and Speech Acts,” *Philrevi The Philosophical Review* 71, no. 4 (1962): 423–32; John R. Searle, “Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts,” *Philrevi The Philosophical Review* 77, no. 4 (1968): 405–24; John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 1969); John R. Searle, *The Philosophy of Language*, Oxford Readings in Philosophy (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (1979; repr., Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁷Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text*, 209.

development of Austin's theory of performatives in a more analytical methodology.¹⁸

Searle's achievement, now, was to give substance to Austin's idea of a general theory of speech acts by moving beyond this cataloging stage and providing a theoretical framework within which the three dimensions of utterance, meaning, and action involved in speech acts could be seen as being unified together.¹⁹

One of Searle's greatest contributions was condensing Austin's numerous categories of illocutionary acts down to five primitive categories: assertives (we tell people how things are), directives (we try to get them to do things), commissives (we commit ourselves to do things), expressives (we express our feelings and attitudes), and declaratives (we bring about changes in the world through our utterances).²⁰ Vern Poythress appreciates the classifications of speech acts and reminds his readers of the complexities of the classifications from Searle's work:

The classification of speech acts into different types, such as assertion, promise, and command, helps us to notice the variety of ways in which human beings use language. That is most helpful in broadening the field, and correcting an earlier philosophical viewpoint that thought of the essence of language as consisting in propositions that were used to make assertive claims about the facts of the world. Promises and commands do different things than do assertions. To his credit, Searle acknowledges at the conclusion of his taxonomy of speech acts, "Often, we do more

¹⁸See Searle, *Speech Acts*.

¹⁹Barry Smith, "John Searle: From Speech Acts to Social Reality," in *John Searle: Contemporary Philosophy in Focus*, ed. Barry Smith, (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 6. See chapter two in Searle's book, *Speech Acts*, for his overview of the rules, aim, meaning, and facts of SAT.

²⁰Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, viii, 1-19. Searle identifies six reasons why he modified Austin's taxonomy: "there is a persistent confusion between verbs and acts, not all the verbs are illocutionary verbs, there is too much overlap of the categories, too much heterogeneity within the categories, many of the verbs listed in the categories don't satisfy the definition given for the category and, most important, there is no consistent principle of classification." Ibid., 12-13. Martinich believes that Searle's taxonomy is a "superior taxonomy." A. P. Martinich, *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 127. Sandy Petrey states, "Searle's most serviceable refinement of Austin is his systematization of speech-act types, which substitutes a five-part schema for the complex (not to say chaotic) classification Austin tentatively put forward in the last of his lectures collected in *How to Do Things with Words*." Sandy Petrey, *Speech Acts and Literary Theory*, (New York: Routledge, 1990), 59-60.

than one of these [kinds of acts] at once in the same utterance.” It is easy for later students to overlook that qualification.²¹

Vanhoozer uses the cross to illustrate the categories and to defend Searle’s position that speech acts can accomplish more than one category at a time:

The cross is perhaps the most extraordinary of God’s communicative acts. The Word made flesh, hanging on a cross, is God’s yes and no. The cross is both promise of eternal life for those who believe it and sentence of eternal death for those who refuse it (2 Cor. 2:15-16). Because God is saying/doing several things in the cross, the cross is a complex of related illocutions: (1) as an assertive, the cross is a statement that God has made provision for sin; (2) as a commissive, the cross makes a promise that “if you believe, you shall be saved”; (3) as an expressive, the cross demonstrates God’s love for the world; (4) as a directive, it is a mandate for Christ’s disciples to “die” with Christ to the world; (5) as a declarative, the cross is an absolution that does what it declares, namely, forgive sins.²²

Another major development by Searle to Austin’s foundational work is the claim that all language is performative. Austin came very close to making this claim in his rhetorical questions at the beginning of lecture XI and may have in a later lecture if cancer had not shortened his life:

When we originally contrasted the performative with the constatives utterance we said that: (1) the performative should be doing something as opposed to just saying something; and (2) the performative is happy or unhappy as opposed to true or false. *Were these distinctions really sound?* Our subsequent discussion of doing and saying certainly seems to point to the conclusion that whenever I ‘say’ anything (except perhaps a mere exclamation like ‘damn’ or ‘ouch’) I shall be performing both locutionary and illocutionary acts, and these two kinds of acts seem to be the very things which we tried to use, under the name of ‘doing’ and ‘saying’, as a means of distinguishing performatives from constatives. *If we are in general always doing both things, how can our distinction survive?*²³

Austin’s distinction of constatives and performatives was torn down by his student Searle, who stated all utterances are performatives, “Propositional acts cannot occur

²¹Vern S. Poythress, “Canon and Speech Act: Limitations in Speech-Act Theory, with Implications for a Putative Theory of Canonical Speech Acts,” *Westminster Theological Journal Fall 2008*, (October 1, 2008), 342.

²²Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*, 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 65–66.

²³Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 133; *italics mine*.

alone; that is, one cannot just refer and predicate without making an assertion or asking a question or performing some other illocutionary act.”²⁴

Sandy Petrey’s work strengthens the claim that all speech is performative. The following explanation, illustration, and conclusion from her book, *Speech Acts and Literary Theory*, seals the case against separating constatives and performatives:

The primary reason for the problems raised is fundamentally the same as the reason for the problems solved: when speech-act theory contextualizes utterances by directing attention to the things they do as illocutions, it simultaneously makes it impossible to decontextualize utterances by attending solely to what they say as locutions. The capital difference between locutionary status and illocutionary force—between speech and speech acts, between words’ meaning and their effect—by no means functions solely in overt performatives. A description utterance has in many cases overpowering impact on the situation in which it’s made.²⁵

Petrey supports her explanation with an illustration showing a descriptive utterance having illocutionary force:

An easy way to feel the extent to which this is so is to imagine a state of affairs that includes a condition embarrassing to one of the people involved. Say John has a large piece of bright green vegetable matter stuck between his front teeth while you, John, and a group of comparative strangers whom John wants to impress are discussing the federal budget deficit. If you interrupt the discussion to announce what you see to John and the others present, you have provided a description meeting all possible criteria of truth and accuracy. But it would be fallacious beyond belief to pretend that providing a description was the only thing you had done. Saying what is can affect a set of circumstances with every bit of the dynamically transformational impact that Austin first invoked to show that words do things other than say what is.²⁶

Petrey concludes confidently:

A locution states, an illocution performs: but when we look at the conditions under which statements are actually produced, we immediately see that they too are putting on performance. The constative too is a performance that can have life-transforming or life-arresting effects on its audience and its referent.²⁷

²⁴Searle, *Speech Acts*, 25.

²⁵Petrey, *Speech Acts and Literary Theory*, 27.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 27.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 32, 41.

Petrey successfully demonstrates that descriptive utterances referred to by Austin as constatives are performative. Every use of language, including descriptive assertions, is performative because every spoken utterance is *someone* saying *something* to *someone* about *something*. The sentence includes both *saying* and *doing*. SAT considers all spoken sentences as performative or said a different way; all *langue* becomes *parole* in the speech act.

SAT has successfully proven that any theory of language must be a theory of action. Speaking is doing. Searle summarized the importance of speech acts for linguistic understanding, “All linguistic communication involves linguistic acts. The unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol, word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act.”²⁸

The Terminology of Speech Act Theory

Locution, Illocution, Perlocution

Speech acts consist of three parts: locution, illocution, and perlocution. Imagine a speaker and a hearer and suppose that in appropriate circumstances, the speaker utters one of the following sentences:

1. Sam smokes habitually.
2. Does Sam smoke habitually?
3. Sam, smoke habitually!
4. Would that Sam smoked habitually.²⁹

In all of these utterances, or speech acts, the propositional content is the same, while the illocutionary force is different. The propositional content contains the same referent, or referring expression, “Sam”; this is true likewise of the predicate, or predicating expression, “smokes habitually” (or some inflected form). The locutionary act of each

²⁸Searle, *Speech Acts*, 16.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 22.

sentence is the same because every sentence is uttering the same propositional content. However, the illocutionary acts do have variance, viz., (1) an assertion, (2) a question, (3) a command, and (4) a wish. The illocutionary acts differ because the speaker has different intentions or uses a different force for each sentence's propositional content.

Perlocutionary acts are the intended effects upon the hearer, viz., (1) for the hearer to believe the statement is true, (2) for the hearer to confirm or deny, (3) for Sam to smoke habitually, (4) for Sam, or another hearer, to experience the speaker's emotional expression of desiring Sam to smoke habitually.

The locutionary act is the uttering of the propositional content. In some linguistics studies, the uttering of words could be broken down and studied as phonemes, morphemes, or sentences. For this dissertation, the utterance act is simply part of the locutionary act in which the speaker utters or vocalizes the words or sentence that construct the propositional content. The reference and predicate of the sentence form the propositional content of the locutionary act.³⁰ The propositional content of each example above is the same because every sentence is referring to "Sam" and expressing the same predicate, "smokes habitually." Sentences can have the same propositional content while having different illocutionary forces (asserting, questioning, commanding).

Illocutionary acts are utterances that add force (speaker's intention) to propositional content (referring and predicating) with the goal of being understood. Vanderveken defined illocutions as "uttering sentences in the context of use of natural languages, speakers attempt to perform illocutionary acts such as statements, questions, declarations, requests, promises, apologies, orders, offers, and refusals, and their attempts

³⁰Allison explains Searle's use of proposition, "As Vanhoozer rightly points out, Searle's use of 'proposition' in the context of speech act theory is significantly different from the common use of that term as 'something which is state.' Searle himself insists that '*a proposition is to be sharply distinguished from an assertion or statement of it...* Stating or asserting are acts (i.e., one family of illocutionary acts) but propositions are not acts.' Thus, a proposition in Searle's theory is the content of the utterance (Austin's locutionary aspect), and this content is expressible and expressed in various ways (i.e., as various illocutionary acts), not only as a statement/assertion." Allison, "Speech Act Theory and Its Implications," 6.

to perform illocutionary acts are part of what they mean and intend to get the hearers to understand in the context of their utterances.”³¹ Searle has five categories of illocutionary acts: assertives (tell people how things are), directives (try to get people to do things), commissives (commit ourselves to do things), expressives (express our feelings and attitudes), and declaratives (bring about changes in the world through our utterances).³²

Perlocutionary acts are the consequential effects caused or traced back to the impact of understanding the illocutionary act. Searle wrote, “Correlated with the notion of illocutionary acts is the notion of the consequences or effects such actions, thoughts, or beliefs, etc. of hearers. For example, by arguing I may *persuade* or *convince* someone, by warning him I may *scare* or *alarm* him, by making a request I may *get him to do something*, by informing him I may *convince him (enlighten, edify, inspire him, get him to realize)*.”³³ Austin wrote of perlocutionary acts as “consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience ...and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them.”³⁴ Unlike locutions and illocutions, not every speech act has a perlocutionary effect:

For example, there is no associated perlocutionary effect of greeting. When I say “Hello” and mean it, I do not necessarily intend to produce or elicit any state or action in my hearer other than the knowledge that he is being greeted. But that knowledge is simply his *understanding* what I said, it is not an additional response or effect.³⁵

³¹Daniel Vanderveken, *Meaning and Speech Acts*, vol. 1, *Principles of Language Use*, (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 7.

³²Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, viii.

³³Searle, *Speech Acts*, 25. The italicized expressions denote perlocutionary acts. Greg Allison wrote, “Some speech acts have very obvious intended perlocutions; for example, since the illocutionary point of a directive is an attempt by the speaker to get his hearer to do something, the intended perlocutionary aspect of a command is obedience; that of a warning, avoidance of the danger/threat, etc. Some perlocutions are unintended, and undoubtedly some are illegitimate.” Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications,” 14–15.

³⁴Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 101.

³⁵Searle, *Speech Acts*, 46.

The Aim of Understanding in SAT

What constitutes a successful speech act? Is it the effect(s) of the illocutionary or perlocutionary act? Can one achieve the intention of the illocutionary act without any consequential perlocutionary effects? These questions frame the discussion about the relationship between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Austin maintained that illocutionary and perlocutionary acts can both produce effects on the hearer, but according to Austin (p. 116), a successful illocutionary act brings about “understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution,” that is, it secures uptake.³⁶

When one understands the speaker’s content and force, SAT describes such understanding two ways: uptake (hearer’s perspective) and illocutionary success (speaker’s perspective). Following understanding, the potential of perlocutionary effects occurs. However, while illocutionary acts cause perlocutionary effects, perlocutionary effects are not the indicator of illocutionary success/understanding. Said differently, one can experience uptake (understanding the content and force of utterance) but not experience the consequential effects (adopting truth, fulfilling a command, believing a promise) of the illocutionary act.

Searle agrees with Austin that illocutionary success is understanding, and perlocutionary effect are the consequential effects dependent on the hearer’s prerogative. He claims, “The intended effect of meaning something is that the hearer should know the illocutionary force and the propositional content of the utterance, not that he should respond or behave in such and such ways.”³⁷ For if an utterance with the illocutionary force of, say, a warning is not understood in this way (that is, as a warning) by the audience to which it is addressed, then (it is held) the illocutionary act of warning cannot

³⁶Kent Bach and Robert Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1982), 4.

³⁷Searle, *The Philosophy of Language*, 8.

be said to have been actually performed.³⁸ The aim is “comprehensibility of the propositional content (locutionary aspect) and the force (illocutionary aspect) of the speech act by the hearer.”³⁹ Allison also separates successful speech acts from perlocutionary effects,

Thus, a successful directive consists in a hearer understanding the propositional content of the command, warning, etc., and grasping the fact that the utterance is an attempt to get him/her to do something. Whether the hearer actually obeys the command or flees the danger expressed in the warning is irrelevant from the point of view of the successfulness of the speech act. As long as the locutionary and illocutionary aspects are recognized, the speech act is successful.⁴⁰

A speech act can achieve the illocutionary effect of understanding (uptake) yet fail to see the intended consequential perlocutionary effects. As Bach and Harnish point out, “The hearer might recognize that he is to believe something and yet refuse.”⁴¹ Believing is a perlocutionary effect that is beyond the ability of the speaker to guarantee. So understanding the assertion (illocutionary effect) can be accomplished without the audience believing or trusting (perlocutionary effect) the assertion.

Rules in Speech Act

Speaking a language is a rule-governed form of behavior. Like the games of football and chess, talking is performing acts according to rules. The rules are constitutive because they can “create or define new forms of behavior.”⁴² Searle

³⁸Searle, *The Philosophy of Language*, 24. Searle provided the following explanation of illocutionary effect, “If I am trying to tell someone something, then (assuming certain conditions are satisfied) as soon as he recognizes that I am trying to tell him something and exactly what it is I am trying to tell him, I have succeeded in telling it to him. Furthermore, unless he recognizes that I am trying to tell him something and what I am trying to tell him, I do not fully succeed in telling it to him. In the case of illocutionary acts we succeed in doing what we are trying to do by getting our audience to recognize what we are trying to do. But the ‘effect’ on the hearer is not a belief or response, it consist simply in the hearer understanding the utterance of the speaker. It is this effect that I have been calling the illocutionary effect.” I, 47.

³⁹Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications,” 15.

⁴⁰Ibid., 16.

⁴¹Bach and Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts*, 14.

⁴²Searle, *The Philosophy of Language*, 41. The other form of rules that exist are known as

explained the function of constitutive rules in football, “The rules of football, for example, do not merely regulate the game of football but as it were create the possibility of or define that activity. The activity of playing football is constituted by acting in accordance with these rules; football has no existence apart from these rules.”⁴³

Constitutive rules are expressed as *X counts as Y in context C*. Just as the rules of football define how to score a touchdown in football, the rules of language define how to ask a question, form a command, or make an assertion. For example, crossing the goal line counts as six points in football is equivalent to a promise counting as obligating oneself to future action in language. The semantic structure of a language may be regarded as a conventional realization of a series of sets of underlying constitutive rules, and that speech acts are acts characteristically performed by uttering expressions in accordance with these sets of constitutive rules.⁴⁴

In the case of speech acts performed within a language, it is a matter of convention—as opposed to strategy, technique, procedure, or natural fact—that the utterance of such and such expressions under certain conditions counts as the making of a promise.⁴⁵ So whether one makes a promise in French “*je promets*” or English, “I promise,” both are promising if the speaker has obligated himself to future action. While conventions may differ from language to language, the rules of making a promise or an assertion are universal to all languages.

regulative because they “regulate a pre-existing activity, an activity whose existence is logically independent of the existence of the rules.” An example of regulative rules is table manners because the act of eating existed prior to and independent from table manners. Searle provides the definitions of both constative and regulate, “Regulative rules regulate a pre-existing activity, an activity whose existence is logically independent of the existence of the rules. Constitutive rules constitute (and also regulate) an activity the existence of which is logically dependent on the rules.” *Ibid.*, 41.

⁴³Searle, *Speech Acts*, 22.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 37.

The relationship between convention and rules can be explained using the game of chess. The existence and execution of chess are entirely dependent on chess' constitutive rules. While the rules are universal for the game of chess, the conventions of such rules may differ. Searle wrote,

First, imagine that chess is played in different countries according to different conventions. Imagine, e.g., that in one country the king is represented by a big piece, in another the king is smaller than the rook. In one country the game is played on a board as we do it, in another the board is represented entirely by a sequence of numbers, one of which is assigned to any piece that 'moves' to that number. Of these different countries, we could say that they play the same game of chess according to different conventional forms. Notice, also, that the rules must be realized in some form in order that the game be playable. Something, even if it is not a material object, must represent what we call the king or the board.⁴⁶

SAT identifies the rules that govern the behavior of language. The theory's focus is on the universal sub-structure of all languages rather than the conventional realization in each language. Searle writes, "When I say that speaking a language is engaging in a rule-governed form of behavior, I am not especially concerned with the particular conventions one invokes in speaking this language or that (and it is primarily for this reason that my investigation differs fundamentally from linguistics, construed as an examination of the actual structure of natural human languages) but the underlying rules which the conventions manifest or realize, in the sense of the chess example."⁴⁷

Meaning in Speech Act

The hearer's understanding of a spoken utterance is dependent on the understanding of the speaker's intention, the lexical meaning of the words spoken, and the rules of language. Searle began his discussion of meaning in *Speech Acts* by asking what difference is there between just uttering sounds or making marks and performing an illocutionary act? Searle answered, "One difference is that the sounds or marks one

⁴⁶Searle, *Speech Acts*, 39.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 41.

makes in the performance of an illocutionary act are characteristically said to *have meaning*, and a second related difference is that one is characteristically said to *mean something* by the utterance of those sounds or marks. Characteristically, when one speaks one means something by what one says; and what one says, the string of sounds that one emits, is characteristically said to have a meaning.”⁴⁸ Along with the lexical meanings of individual words or phrases and the rules of syntax, the meaning of oral communication must include the speaker’s intention.

By answering the following questions, the hearer arrives at the utterance’s meaning: (1) What are the lexical meanings of the words spoken? (2) Based on the rules of language, what are the possibilities of what the speaker meant by using these words together? (3) What is the most likely intention of the speaker in this context? The combination of these three answers results in conventional realization, understanding what the speaker is doing with what the speaker is saying in a specific context. Searle used the greeting, “Hello,” to illustrate how meaning is determined in communication,

Let us illustrate these points with a very simple example used earlier—an utterance of the sentence “Hello”. 1. Understanding the sentence “Hello” is knowing its meaning. 2. The meaning of “Hello” is determined by semantic rules, which specify both its conditions of utterance and what the utterance counts as. The rules specify that under certain conditions an utterance of “Hello” counts as a greeting of the hearer by the speaker. 3. Uttering “Hello” and meaning it is a matter of (a) intending to get the hearer to recognize that he is being greeted, (b) intending to get him to recognize that he is being greeted by means of getting him to recognize one’s intention to greet him, (c) intending to get him to recognize one’s intention to greet him in virtue of his knowledge of the meaning of the sentence “Hello”. 4. The sentence “Hello” then provides a conventional means of greeting people. If a speaker says “Hello” and means it he will have intentions (a), (b), (c), and from the hearer’s side the hearer’s understanding the utterance will simply consist in those intentions being achieved. The intentions will be achieved in general if the hearer understands the sentence “Hello”, i.e., understands its meaning, i.e., understands that under certain conditions its utterance counts as a greeting.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Searle, *Speech Acts*, 42–43.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 49. Searle’s technical explanation of the communication bridge: (1) Understanding a sentence is knowing its meaning. (2) The meaning of a sentence is determined by rules, and those rules specify both conditions of utterance of the sentence and also what the utterance counts as. (3) Uttering a sentence and meaning it is a matter of (a) intending (i-I) to get the hearer to know (recognize, be aware of)

Searle's inclusion of the speaker's intention was motivated by the work of Grice, specifically his article, "Meaning."⁵⁰ Searle agrees with Grice that meaning is dependent on the hearer's understanding of the intentions of the speaker.⁵¹ However, two defects exist when Grice defined meaning solely based on the effects of the speaker's intentions: One, "it fails to account for the extent to which meaning can be a matter of rules and conventions," and two, "by defining meaning in terms of intended effects it confuses illocutionary with perlocutionary acts."⁵² As a corrective to Grice, Searle included the constitutive rules of language (how one promises, asserts, or commands) and identified understanding as the aim of meaning.

By including the illocutionary act in the meaning of the utterance, Searle corrected Austin's view of meaning. Austin understood the meaning of an utterance to be expressed in the locutionary act, precisely the rhetic act of locutions.⁵³ As a result of Austin's position, illocutionary acts are then expressions of the locutionary act's meaning

that certain states of affairs specified by certain of the rules obtain, (b) intending to get the hearer to know (recognize, be aware of) these things by means of getting him to recognize i-I and (c) intending to get him to recognize i-I in virtue of his knowledge of the rules for the sentence uttered. (4) The sentence then provides a conventional means of achieving the intention to produce a certain illocutionary effect in the hearer. If a speaker utters the sentence and means it he will have intentions (a), (b), (c). The hearer's understanding the utterance will simply consist in those intentions being achieved. And the intentions will in general be achieved if the hearer understands the sentence, i.e., knows its meaning, i.e., knows the rules governing its elements. Searle, *Speech Acts*, 48-49.

⁵⁰H. P. Grice, "Meaning," *Philosophical Review* 66, no. 3 (1957): 377-88.

⁵¹Searle states his agreement with Grice, "In an article entitled Meaning, Grice gives the following analysis of the notion 'non-natural meaning.' To say that a speaker S meant something by X is to say that S intended the utterance of X to produce some effect in a hearer H by means of the recognition of this intention. Though I do not think this an adequate account, for reasons to be made later, I think it is a very useful beginning of an account of meaning, first because it makes a connection between meaning and intention, and secondly because it captures the following essential feature of linguistic communication. In speaking I attempt to communicate certain things to my hearers by getting him to recognize my intention to communicate just those things. I achieve the intended effect on the hearer by getting him to recognize what it is my intention to achieve, it is in general achieved. He understands what I am saying as soon as he recognizes my intention in uttering what I utter as an intention to say that thing." Searle, *Speech Acts*, 43.

⁵²Searle, *Speech Acts*, 43. Searle's full interaction with Grice's article, "Meaning," can be found in Searle, *Speech Acts*, 42-50.

⁵³See Searle, "Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts," and Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 109, 121.

with force. Searle, based on the conviction that “no sentence can be completely force-neutral,” includes the illocutionary act in meaning.⁵⁴ He replaced the rhetic act of Austin’s scheme with the entire illocutionary act, which includes the force of the utterance. The act of referring and predicating cannot occur without some intention or force, so the meaning of the utterance, or what the speaker meant, is anchored to both the locutionary act and illocutionary act.

Conclusion

The overview of SAT through the works of Austin and Searle has shown that language is performative, that is, to *say* something is to *do* something. Every speech act is an utterance that is *someone* saying *something* to *someone* about *something*. When one speaks, one intends for three acts to occur: uttering of the propositional content (locution), conveying of one’s intentions through force (illocutionary act), and consequential effects upon the hearer (perlocutionary act). Illocutionary acts aim to be understood (illocutionary success), while perlocutionary acts are consequential effects following understanding and dependent on the hearer’s prerogative. The meaning of one’s speech is a combination of the speaker’s intention, lexical meaning of propositional content, and rules of language.

Using this introduction, SAT provides some initial explanations of the theology of preaching. For example, chapter two shows that preachers steward, herald, serve, and witness to the Word of God, while chapter three explains how preachers do such tasks in communication through illocutionary acts of asserting, commanding, promising, expressing, and declaring. The preacher of God’s Word is asserting its truths, commanding acceptance and belief in its authority, promising its power and trustworthiness, expressing its incalculable riches, and declaring its reality changing

⁵⁴Searle, "Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts," 413.

message. The preacher's fulfillment of God's commissioned task of preaching His Word (exposition, application, and exhortation) is expressed through illocutionary acts (assertions, directives, commissives, and expressives).

SAT explains the relationship between the Word of God and the communication of preaching. Every illocutionary act has propositional content, and for preaching, the majority of the content is the Word of God. The preacher's assertions are the truths of the Word of God. The preacher commands God's Word. The preacher promises the faithfulness of God's Word. The majority of the preacher's propositional content is derived by referring to and predicating God's authoritative record of His revelation. Since every spoken utterance is *someone* saying *something* to *someone* about *something*, then preaching is a preacher stewarding, serving, witnessing to, and heralding about and from the Word of God to a gathered audience.

SAT explains how God-designed language is a communication tool for God's desired work of changing the hearer. As with any speech, the preacher hopes that the illuminated understanding of his illocutionary acts with the Word of God will lead to changes in the spirituality of the hearer. When the hearer yields to the convicting, authenticating, and calling of the Spirit's work with the preacher's illocutionary acts, preaching serves as an agent of change for God's works (perlocutionary effects) of saving, sanctifying, and sustaining grace. As designed by God and explained by SAT, language is capable of fulfilling God's plan to change the spirituality of the audience through Holy Spirit-empowered preaching.

These examples have shown the initial contributions SAT provides to the explanation and expression of the theology of preaching. The following chapters further explore the theory's capacity to provide a linguistic explanation by looking deeper into each part of the speech act and its relation to preaching.

CHAPTER 4

LOCUTIONARY ACT IN PREACHING

In a typical speech situation involving a speaker, a hearer, and an utterance by the speaker, there are many kinds of acts associated with the speaker's utterance.¹ Bach and Harnish concisely summarize the intimacy between the parts of the speech act, "In uttering an expression, speaker says something to hearer; in saying something to hearer, speaker does something; and by doing something, speaker affects hearer."² They used four verbs to represent the parts, or different kinds of acts, within the speech act: uttering, saying, doing, and affecting. The uttering and saying occur in the locutionary act, the doing occurs with the illocutionary act, and the affecting represents the perlocutionary act.

Austin differentiated the individual parts of the speech act by using the prepositions: of, in, and by. The act of 'saying something' in this full normal sense (uttering certain noises and words while referring and predicating) I call, i.e. dub, the performance of a locutionary act.³ He used the preposition "in" to distinguish the doing of speech "as the performance of an 'illocutionary' act, i.e. performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something (locution)."⁴

¹John R. Searle, *The Philosophy of Language*, Oxford Readings in Philosophy (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 39.

²Kent Bach and Robert Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1982), 3.

³John L. Austin and James O. Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, 2nd ed. (1962; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 94; *italics mine*.

⁴*Ibid.*, 99–100.

Third, Austin used “by” for the perlocutionary act, “Thirdly, we may also perform *perlocutionary acts*: what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even, say, surprising or misleading.”⁵

This chapter, along with chapters five and six, will utilize Allison’s five sentences with the reference of “Jesus Christ” and the predication of “come again” for illustrative material:

1. Jesus Christ has come again.
2. Jesus Christ, come again! (God speaking)
3. I, Jesus Christ, will come again.
4. Oh! Jesus Christ has come again!
5. Jesus Christ hereby comes again. (God speaking; at this utterance, Jesus Christ returns.)⁶

This chapter focuses on the locutionary act—the act *of* uttering and saying. In all five sentences, the speaker is uttering and saying the same propositional content, “Jesus Christ come again.” In the act *of* saying this propositional content, the speaker accomplishes the same locutionary act despite the entire speech act performing different illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. This chapter presents Austin’s and Searle’s positions on locutionary acts and the theocentric distinctive of biblical preaching’s locutionary acts.

Locutionary Act

The locutionary act initiates speech acts. While the entire speech act is somebody saying something about something to someone, the locutionary act is specifically the *somebody saying something*. Sadock provided the following explanation,

⁵Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 109.

⁶Gregg Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” *Theological Research Exchange Network*, no. ETS-4542 (November 19, 1993): 11. Allison’s examples of the five illocutionary acts (1. Assertive, 2. Directive, 3. Commissive, 4. Expressive, 5. Declarative) are helpful for the reader’s understanding of the different parts of the speech act and how each part is constructed and functions within the entire speech act. These sentences will be referred to throughout chapters four thru six.

Locutionary acts are acts that are performed in order to communicate. In speaking, acts of phonation (e.g., aspirating a /t/, closing the glottis, producing a second formant with a frequency of 2700Hz, etc.) belong in this class. There are analogous acts that are performed in the process of nonvocal communication acts, like dotting an i or holding down a telegraph key for one-tenth of a second. Higher-order grammatical acts also belong in this category. Using the word *axolotl*, ending a sentence with a preposition, predicating the baldness of the King of France, and referring to Pegasus are all locutionary acts.⁷

Locutionary acts include the vocalization of syllables and proper construction of propositional content in regards to vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. Simply said, two acts make up the locutionary act: utterance act and propositional act. This section surveys the work of Austin and Searle on locutionary acts and concludes with a summary that answers four questions of locutionary acts: What are the parts of a locutionary act? How does one successfully perform a locutionary act? What is the relationship between meaning and locutionary acts? What are the differences between locutions and illocutions?

Austin on Locutionary Act

Austin's speech act trichotomy included the locutionary act. He recognized that speech begins but never ends, with the uttering of words, "The uttering of the words is, indeed, usually a, or even *the*, leading incident in the performance of an act (of betting or what not), the performance of which is also the object of the utterance, but it is far from being usually, even if it is ever, the *sole* thing necessary if the act is to be deemed to have been performed."⁸ In lecture seven, Austin presented his developed understanding of the locutionary act as three senses,

To begin with, there is a whole group of senses, which I shall label (A), in which to say anything must always be to do something, the group of senses which together add up to 'saying' something, in the full sense of 'say'. We may agree, without insisting on formulations or refinements, that to say anything is

⁷Jerrold M. Sadock, *Toward a Linguistic Theory of Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), 8.

⁸Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 8.

(A.a) always to perform the act of uttering certain noises (a ‘phonetic’ act), and the utterance is a phone;

(A.b) always to perform the act of uttering certain vocable or words, i.e. noises of certain types belonging to and as belonging to a certain vocabulary, in a forming to a certain grammar, with a certain intonation, &c. This act we may call a ‘phatic’ act, and the utterance which it is the act of uttering a ‘pheme’ (as distinct from the phememe of linguistic theory); and

(A.c.) generally to perform the act of using that pheme or its constituents with a certain more or less definite ‘sense’ and a more or less definite ‘reference’ (which together are equivalent to ‘meaning’). This act we may call a ‘rhetic’ act, and the utterance which it is the act of uttering a ‘rHEME’.⁹

The three senses of the locutionary act for Austin included phonetic (uttering), phatic (vocabulary and grammar), and rhetic (sense and reference). Austin taught that the locutionary act “includes the utterance of certain noises, the utterance of certain words in a certain construction, and the utterance of them with a certain ‘meaning’ in the favorite philosophical sense of that word, i.e. with a certain sense and with a certain reference.”¹⁰

All three of Austin’s locutionary components are identifiable in every one of Allison’s five examples above. For example, in the first sentence above, the phonetic act is accomplished, and the speech act is initiated by the uttering of the words: Jesus, Christ, has, come, and again. At the same time, by using understood vocabulary and syntax, the speaker performed the phatic act of saying, “Jesus Christ has come again.”¹¹ The rhetic act is ‘He said, “Jesus Christ has come again.”’ The rhetic act includes referring to the object, “Jesus Christ,” and the predicate expression of “has come again.”

⁹Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 92–93.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 94.

¹¹Typically, Austin attempts to distinguish the phatic act and the rhetic act by using double quotations for phatic and single quotations for rhetic. He does this because the double quotations is recording the exact words and grammar that was used by speaker. On the other hand, single quotations are used with the rhetic because it is an indirect quotations in which one must make a decision on what verb to use in order to represent the force of the rhetic act. Consequently, double quotations (phatic act) is force-neutral and the single quotations (rhetic act) is assigned force by the speaker’s verb selection. Austin will refer to double quotations (phatic act) as literal meaning and single quotations (rhetic act) as intended-meaning. See Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 94–98.

In terms of meaning, Austin said that the literal meaning of the utterance is “Jesus Christ has come again,” and the intended meaning is ‘He said, “Jesus Christ has come again.”’ The verb selected for the rhetic act (intended meaning) reports what the phatic and phonetic acts expressed (literal meaning). The verb selection can include more than the verb “said:” “We cannot, however, always use ‘said that’ easily: we would say ‘told to’, ‘advise to’, &c., if he used the imperative mood, or such equivalent phrases as ‘said I was to’, ‘said I should’, &c. Compare such phrases as ‘bade me welcome’ and ‘extended his apologies.’”¹² The rhetic act of ‘He said, “Jesus Christ has come again”’ takes on different meanings as one replaces “said” with promised, declared, testified, argued, or prophesied.

A weakness discovered by Searle is that the force, or function, created by verb selection is similar to the force of the illocutionary act. For example, the force is different between the following two rhetic acts because of verb selection: ‘He *stated*, “Repent and believe in Jesus Christ.”’ ‘He *commanded*, “Repent and believe in Jesus Christ.”’ The first sentence has the force of an assertion—stating propositional content. On the other hand, the second one carries the force of a command—attempting to get the hearer to “repent and believe.” The problem with giving force to the rhetic act is the consequential impact it has on the intended meaning of the expression, which strictly belongs to the role of the illocutionary act.

Searle correctly identified that Austin’s practice of using different verbs to represent the rhetic act resulted in the rhetic act becoming the same as the illocutionary act. Austin hinted at this same conclusion,

To perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and eo ipso to perform an illocutionary act, as I propose to call it. Thus in performing a locutionary act we shall also be performing such an act as: Asking or answering a question, giving some information or an assurance or a warning, announcing a verdict or an

¹²Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 97.

intention, pronouncing sentence, making an appointment or an appeal or a criticism, making an identification or giving a description, and the numerous like.¹³

While Austin saw considerable overlap between the rhetic act and the illocutionary act, he never replaced or eliminated the rhetic act. Instead, he attempted to distinguish the two by using the terms: meaning and force.¹⁴ He wanted the rhetic act to represent the neutral expression of the literal meaning and the illocutionary act to represent the expression of the literal meaning with force—intended meaning.

In summary, Austin wrote concerning locutionary acts,

We had made three rough distinctions between the phonetic act, the phatic act, and the rhetic act. The phonetic act is merely the act of uttering certain noises. The phatic act is the uttering of certain vocables or words, i.e. noises of certain types, belonging to and as belonging to, a certain vocabulary, conforming to and as conforming to a certain grammar. The rhetic act is the performance of an act of using those vocables with a certain more-or-less definite sense and reference.¹⁵

Austin identified the locutionary act as necessary for the illocutionary act,

It has, of course, been admitted that to perform an illocutionary act is necessarily to perform a locutionary act: that, for example, to congratulate is necessarily to say certain words; and to say certain words is necessarily, at least in part, to make certain more or less indescribable movements with the vocal organs.¹⁶

¹³Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 98–99.

¹⁴Searle addresses the relationship between the rhetic act and illocutionary act in his article, John R. Searle, “Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts,” *Philrevi The Philosophical Review* 77, no. 4 (1968): 405–24. This article and Searle’s replacement of the rhetic act with the illocutionary act is covered later in this chapter under the heading, Searle on Locutionary Act.

¹⁵Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 95. Martinich summarized Austin’s treatment of locutionary acts in his third edition of *Philosophy of Language*, “Austin divides locutionary acts into three subgroups. First, phonetic acts are acts of producing sounds, whether or not these sounds are part of a natural language or used to communicate. Second, phatic acts are acts of producing sounds that both are part of a language and are intended as being construed as parts of a language. The last clause is necessary in order to exclude cases of producing sounds that accidentally or incidentally belong to a language. For example, suppose that the sound of clearing one’s throat has a meaning in some language. People who clear their throats do not perform a phatic act unless they intend that sound to be taken as a linguistic object. Third, rhetic acts are acts of using sounds with a certain sense and reference. A person who says, ‘The cat is on the mat,’ in order to express that a certain cat is on a certain mat is performing a rhetic act, because he or she is referring to things in the world and saying something about them. It should be obvious that performing a rhetic act involves performing a phatic act, and performing a phatic act involves performing a phonetic act. But the converse relations do not hold.” A. P. Martinich, ed., *The Philosophy of Language*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 117.

¹⁶Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 114.

Searle on Locutionary Act

Like his teacher Austin, Searle's treatment of the speech act consisted of "many kinds of acts" labeled utterance, propositional, illocutionary, and perlocutionary.¹⁷ The only taxonomical difference between Searle's quadripartite and Austin's trichotomy of a speech act is that Searle separates the locutionary act into two acts (utterance and propositional). The utterance act is the speaker moving his jaw and tongue, resulting in the uttering of strings of words (morphemes, sentences).¹⁸ The utterance act is necessary for an illocutionary act to occur, unlike the propositional act.¹⁹

The propositional act is the speaker referring and predicating to the hearer. Predicating expressions provide the content only, while referring expressions aim to identify an object. Searle provided the following explanation of referring expressions,

It is characteristic of each of these expressions that their utterance serves to pick out or identify one 'object' or 'entity' or 'particular' apart from other objects, about which the speaker then goes on to say something, or ask some question, etc. Any expression which serves to identify any thing, process, event, action, or any other kind of 'individual' or 'particular' I shall call a referring expression. Referring expressions point to particular things; they answer the questions "Who?" "What?" "Which?" It is by their function, not always by their surface grammatical form or their manner of performing their function, that referring expressions are to be known.²⁰

He provides three examples of referring expressions in English:

Paradigmatic referring expressions in English fall into three classes as far as the surface structure of English sentences is concerned: proper names, noun phrases beginning with the definite article or a possessive pronoun or noun and followed by a singular noun, and pronouns. The utterance of a referring expression characteristically serves to pick out or identify a particular object apart from other objects.²¹

¹⁷John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 1969), 39.

¹⁸Ibid., 24, 39.

¹⁹Searle provided the examples of saying "Hurrah!" or "Ouch!" for illocutionary acts that have an utterance act but not a propositional act. See Ibid., 43.

²⁰Ibid., 26-27.

²¹Ibid., 28.

The propositional content in the examples above is the referring expression of “Jesus Christ” and the predicating expression of “come again.” The examples above all have the same propositional content because they have the same referring and predicating expressions. Because proposition and illocutionary acts are distinguished acts, Searle uses content and function to distinguish them, “We have throughout the analysis of speech acts been distinguishing between what we might call *content* and *function*. In the total illocutionary act the content is the proposition; the function is the illocutionary force with which the proposition is presented.”²²

We thus detach the notions of referring and predicating from the notions of such complete speech acts as asserting, questioning, commanding, etc., and the justification for this separation lies in the fact that the same reference and predication can occur in the performance of different complete speech acts.²³ So while the propositional content of each example above is all the same, the illocutionary force is different in each of the five.

Searle represents the entire speech act with the symbols $F(p)$, where (F) represents the illocutionary force and (p) represents the propositional content.²⁴ The (p) contains the referring (R) and predicating (P) acts, denoted as $F(RP)$.²⁵ His symbolic representation helps illustrate the fact that propositional acts are not illocutionary acts because propositional content cannot assert, command, promise, declare, or express on their own. Said differently, the propositional act is different from asserting or declaring it with force. Propositional acts cannot occur alone; that is, one cannot just refer and

²²Searle, *Speech Acts*, 125.

²³*Ibid.*, 23.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 31.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 32.

predicate without making an assertion or asking a question or performing some other illocutionary act.²⁶

Searle modifies Austin's understanding of the locutionary act by distinguishing the content and the force of a total speech act.²⁷ Searle labeled the force-neutral expression of the proposition as a propositional act and the illocutionary act as an expressed proposition with speaker-intended force. This modification eliminates Austin's inclusion of a rhetic act in locutionary acts.

Searle justified this change because any attempt to abstract a rhetic act from the total speech act requires using a verb to summarize the phatic act, resulting in function, or force, being added to the propositional content. Consequently, the rhetic act becomes an illocutionary act because no summary verb is force-neutral.²⁸ When a proposition is expressed, it is always expressed in the performance of an illocutionary act.²⁹

²⁶Searle, *Speech Acts*, 25.

²⁷See Searle, "Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts."

²⁸Searle, "Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts," 406–8, 410-413. Searle wrote, "Furthermore, there is no way to give an indirect speech report of a rhetic act (performed in the utterance of a complete sentence) which does not turn the report into the report of an illocutionary act. No sentence is completely force-neutral. Every sentence has some illocutionary force potential, if only of a very broad kind, built into its meaning. For example, even the most primitive of the old-fashioned grammatical categories of indicative, interrogative, and imperative sentences already contain determinants of illocutionary force. For this reason there is no specification of a locutionary act performed in the utterance of a complete sentence which will not determine the specification of an illocutionary act. There are indeed phonetic acts of uttering certain noises, phatic acts of uttering certain vocables or words (and sentences), and illocutionary acts, such as making statements, asking questions, giving commands, but it does not seem that there are or can be acts of using those vocables in sentences with sense and reference which are not already (at least purported) illocutionary acts." Ibid., 412. Searle continued, "The point I am making now is that there is no way to abstract a rhetic act in the utterance of a complete sentence which does not abstract an illocutionary act as well, for a rhetic act is always an illocutionary act of one kind or another. Since a rhetic act involves the utterances of a sentence with a certain meaning and the sentence invariably as part of its meaning contains some indicator of illocutionary force, no utterance of a sentence with its meaning is completely force-neutral. Every serious literal utterance contains some indicators of force as part of meaning which is to say that every rhetic act is an illocutionary act." Ibid., 412-413.

²⁹Searle, *Speech Acts*, 29.

Summary

Both SAT theorists agree that the locutionary act involves elements of uttering, referring, and predicating. This dissertation agrees with and accepts Searle's elimination of Austin's inclusion of a rhetic act in the locutionary act. The taxonomy adopted for the locutionary act has two parts: the utterance act and the propositional act. One accomplishes a locutionary act by uttering sounds or words that have an understood literal meaning with the hearer.³⁰ While the locutionary act may include propositional content, at the minimum, it must include the utterance act.

The locutionary act provides the content of the speech act, which has a wide range of possible meanings depending on the speaker's intention or use of the content. The multitude of possible meanings comes from the lexical meanings of the words and the syntax, grammar, and mood of the sentence. The intended meaning is only arrived at by including the illocutionary act with the locutionary act. The locutionary act is dependent on the illocutionary act to supply/identify the speaker's use or the force/function of the utterance as spoken in the specific situation under specific conventions. A locutionary act is the utterance of propositional content that has a multitude of possible meanings that is clarified by the illocutionary act's specific usage of such propositional content.

Preaching and Theocentric Locutionary Acts

The focus of this chapter now shifts from locutionary acts in all communication to the unique aspects of biblical preaching's locutionary acts, specifically, its theo-centeredness. Biblical preaching is theocentric because of its

³⁰Bach and Harnish's presentation of Linguistic Presumption (LP) helps explain what is meant by shared understanding of the uttered sounds or words. They explain linguistic presumption (LP) as "the mutual belief in the linguistic community (CI) that (i) the members of CI share language, and (ii) that whenever any member (speaker) utters any expression in language to any other member hearer, hearer can identify what speaker is saying, given that hearer knows the meaning(s) of expression in language and is aware of the appropriate background information." Bach and Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts*, 7.

characteristics of godly compulsion, empowerment, and content. Christian preachers are not uttering words solely in their strength but rather are uttering words with the unction or anointing of the Spirit.³¹ Biblical preaching does not exist to proclaim any propositional content that the preacher deems worthy; instead, it exists as God's ordained method of declaring His Word through text-driven propositional statements. The theocenteredness of biblical preaching's locutionary acts sets it apart from all other forms of preaching.

Utterance Act: Godly Compulsion and Empowerment

Godly empowerment has been a necessity for Christian witness since Jesus promised the Spirit in Luke 24 following His resurrection and before His ascension. In verse 49, Jesus commanded the disciples to "stay in the city until you are empowered from on high" with the Spirit that His Father has promised. The empowerment enables them to fulfill Jesus' command in verses 46-48: "He also said to them, 'This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.'" Jesus' commission to proclaim the gospel to all nations included the empowerment of God.

Luke records in Acts 1:8 Jesus' promise that the disciples "will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Jesus was connecting the commission to be his witnesses and the promise of the Spirit for empowerment. Jesus was enlisting the

³¹Baumann states that preaching's dependence on the Spirit is universally accepted, "Every textbook on preaching states or implies that preaching without the Holy Spirit is dead. He inspires preparation, grants unction in delivery, and produces all significant results that follow the preaching event. In the words of John Knox, 'True preaching from start to finish is the work of the Spirit.' No one writing on the subject of preaching feels obliged to take issue with this thesis. It is uniformly accepted as basic." J. Daniel Baumann, *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 277.

church for His mission of proclamation of the gospel to all nations and empowering them with the necessary power and presence of God.

The fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send the empowering Spirit is found in Acts 2:4 when the disciples are "all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them." Upon the reception of the Spirit, the early church believers began to declare the "magnificent acts of God" (Acts 2:11). Due to some confusion about what was happening, Peter stood up, raised his voice, and proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ to the crowd. Luke records in 2:40 that Peter "testified" and "strongly urged" the crowd to be saved through the good news of Jesus. Peter's declaration and the other disciples declaring the magnificent acts of God demonstrate that the Spirit's filling led to empowered witness and faithfulness to the commissions of Luke 24 and Acts 1. The church has needed and will continue to need the Spirit to fulfill Jesus' commission.

Every aspect of the church of Jesus Christ is dependent on the power and presence of God. Preaching is not an exception to the necessity of the Spirit. Vines and Shaddix plainly stated the need for the Spirit, "No one can preach with power apart from the anointing of the Holy Spirit."³² Dr. Lloyd-Jones wrote, "I have kept and reserved to this last lecture what is after all the greatest essential in connection with preaching, and that is the unction and the anointing of the Holy Spirit."³³ The utterance acts of preaching are dependent on the Spirit for compulsion, boldness, and anointing.

The utterance act of preaching is the preacher's pronunciation and verbalization of the syllables and words. The NT teaches that God emboldens or compels such utterance acts. For example, the apostle Paul asked the Ephesian church twice in

³²Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 64.

³³David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 321.

Ephesians 6:19-20 to pray so that he would open his mouth “to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel” and that he “might be bold enough to speak about it (the gospel).” He requested the Ephesians to intercede on his behalf by asking God to compel Him to utter the gospel boldly. Said using SAT’s terminology, please pray that God would help me accomplish the utterance act of proclaiming the gospel boldly.

Paul recognized that amid persecution and struggle, God empowered him to proclaim to the Thessalonian church. Boldness to proclaim appears in 1 Thessalonians 2:2: “On the contrary, after we had previously suffered and were treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, we were emboldened by our God to speak the gospel of God to you in spite of great opposition.” Paul credits God for emboldening him to utter the gospel of God despite difficult circumstances. Throughout the book of Acts, despite the fear of persecution, the same empowering confidence exists in different people and places: Acts 4 with Peter and John, Acts 9 with Paul, Acts 13 with Paul and Barnabas, Acts 18 with Apollos, and Paul in Acts 19, 26, and 28.³⁴ Throughout the early church and

³⁴The common idea in all these chapters is someone speaking boldly the gospel of Jesus. These passages describe the bold speech using either *παρρησία* or *παρρησιάζομαι*. Eckhard Schnabel provides the following summary of the root, *παρρησία*, “In Greek literature the term has primarily a political meaning, describing the right and the willingness to express one’s opinion freely. Since this freedom of speech implies that the speaker commits himself to the truth of what he says—it was the male, free citizen of a Greek city who enjoyed this right—the term denotes ‘candor, straightforwardness.’ Since candid speech which avoids evasions and falsehoods exposes a person to danger, *παρρησία* also has the nuance of ‘hardiness, courage, audacity, confidence.’ Employed by the wrong person, *παρρησία* degenerates into insolence and blasphemy. Since *παρρησία* refers not only to speech but also to conduct in general, it was used by the Cynic philosophers as a moral concept: ‘Together with *ἐλευθερία*, it was viewed as the highest good of the reflective, morally secure person who lives in full ‘openness’ toward his fellow citizens, friends, and enemies, and who both praises and severely reproves them.’ In Acts, ‘boldness’ (*παρρησία*) describes ‘the openness of the mission proclamation’ in the sense of ‘fearlessness, candor, and joyous confidence over against (especially Jewish) critics and adversaries.’” In reference to Acts 28:31 he wrote, “Paul proclaimed and taught the gospel ‘with all boldness’ (*μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας*). The noun translated as ‘boldness’ (*παρρησία*; see on 4:13) could describe Paul’s preaching and teaching as communication ‘that conceals nothing and passes over nothing’ (outspokenness, frankness), as ‘openness to the public’ before whom the preaching and teaching takes place, and as the ‘boldness and confidence’ (courage, fearlessness) with which Paul continued his preaching ministry.” Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Expanded Digital Edition, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), chap. 4:1-22, sect. Explanation of the Text, verse 4:13 and chap. 28:16-31, sect. Explanation of the Text, verse 28:31, Logos Software. See also Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 3:657–60.

its expansion to the nations, Luke records a boldness that existed in the church's testimony as a result of being filled by the supernatural power of God.

Another example of the godly empowerment of the utterance act of Paul's preaching is found in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Paul discloses that when he went to Corinth, he was not confident based on "brilliance of speech or wisdom" nor inward strength, as seen in his description of being "in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling." Instead, Paul credits "a demonstration of the Spirit's power" for his preaching and speech. His speech, or acts of utterances, were empowered by the Spirit so that he could overcome his fear, weakness, and trembling.

The confidence to speak begins with godly compulsion upon the proclaimer. Following a description of Paul's ministry of proclamation in Colossians 1:25-28, Paul states in 1:29 that he "labors for this, striving with his (God's) strength that works powerfully in me." Concerning this verse, Keller wrote, "He (Paul) speaks of an intense, churning spiritual power within him that generates a fierce internal yearning as he preaches."³⁵ York connects the power of the Spirit and the compulsion to preach, "The power we want is that which can only be attributed to the Holy Spirit as he grips our hearts with the Word and compels us to preach to others the truth that has so captivated us."³⁶ God's boldness initiates the utterance act of faithful preaching.

Beyond initiating, God also influences the utterance act with unction through the Holy Spirit. As previously stated, unction is "God giving power, and enabling, through the Spirit, to the preacher in order that he may do this work in a manner that lifts it up beyond the efforts and endeavors of a man to a position in which the preacher is

³⁵Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), 193.

³⁶Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 7.

being used by the Spirit and becomes the channel through whom the Spirit works.”³⁷

Lloyd-Jones asserted that preaching is not just a man uttering words, but rather, a man speaking words under the influence of the Spirit,

True preaching, after all, is God acting. It is not just a man uttering words; it is God using him. He is being used of God. He is under the influence of the Holy Spirit; it is what Paul calls in 1 Corinthians 2 ‘preaching in demonstration of the Spirit of power’. Or as he puts it in 1 Thessalonians 1:5: ‘Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance...’ There it is; and that is an essential element in true preaching.³⁸

Some homileticians have described the anointing of the Spirit as the preacher being “possessed” by the Spirit. Vines and Shaddix explain possession as being “caught up in the message by the power of the Spirit,” which results in him being “a channel used by the Holy Spirit.”³⁹ Lloyd-Jones refers to anointing as possession, too:

You are a man ‘possessed’, you are taken hold of, and taken up. I like to put it like this—and I know of nothing on earth that is comparable to this feeling—that when it happens you have a feeling that you are not actually doing the preaching, you are looking on. You are looking on at yourself in amazement as this is happening. It is not your effort; you are just the instrument, the channel, the vehicle: and the Spirit is using you, and you are looking on in great enjoyment and astonishment.⁴⁰

Both of these works describe the influence of being under the Spirit as being “possessed” by the Spirit. The concept of being “possessed” is similar to being filled by the Holy Spirit as in Ephesians 5:18: “And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit.” Two agents accomplish the utterance acts of preaching: God and the preacher.⁴¹

³⁷Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 322.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 108.

³⁹Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 66. See also Baumann, *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching*, 282.

⁴⁰Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 339–40.

⁴¹Vines and Shaddix speak of the two mediums of preaching, “*The medium: Holy Spirit/human personality*. The message of the Bible is communicated through a twofold medium: the Holy Spirit and a human personality. From outset to conclusion, preaching is the communication of the Holy Spirit. John Knox said, ‘True preaching from start to finish is the work of the Spirit.’ He inspired the Word we preach. He illuminates our understanding as to its meaning. He anoints our communication of it. He enlightens the

The anointing of the Holy Spirit empowers the preacher with communication giftedness. The Spirit provides inspiration, the fullness of thought, freedom, clarity, ease, authority, confidence, and joy to the preacher during the uttering of the sermon.⁴² Vines and Shaddix speak to the advantage that this spiritual fervor provides for preaching:

In the area of speech communication, the gospel preacher has an advantage that separates him from all other public communicators. Even secular public speakers can be passionate about their subject matter, but one particular ingredient is reserved solely for the one who speaks the words of God. This ingredient enables the preacher's words to be pointed, sharp, and powerful. This ingredient has been called anointing.⁴³

Since preachers are vehicles and instruments for the Holy Spirit, preachers should desire to prepare themselves for such usage. The anointing of the Spirit cannot be earned or secured through human efforts; however, preachers should “strive and agonize in our study and commitment to our calling so that we are always at God’s complete disposal.”⁴⁴ York wrote on how preparation does not discount the empowerment of Spirit, “Our preparation, our diligence to study, our commitment to be better communicators does not discount the power of the Spirit, but instead expects it. Because we really believe that God can and will use us, we prepare the text, the sermon, and our own delivery skills so we are fit vessels for God to use.”⁴⁵ Vines and Shaddix identified two areas of the preacher’s life that prepare him to be fit for usage: strong convictions about God’s Word and the practice of intimate personal worship.⁴⁶

minds of listeners. He convicts their hearts and prompts them to respond. Preaching is the Holy Spirit event. If He is left out, preaching does not happen. Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 25.

⁴²See Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 339–40 and Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 64.

⁴³Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 64.

⁴⁴York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 9.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 9. Dr. Lloyd-Jones wrote, “The right way to look upon the unction of the Spirit is to think of it as that which comes upon the preparation.” Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 321. For relationship between preparing and Holy Spirit empowerment see Baumann, *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching*, 284.

⁴⁶Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 64.

God's presence and power exist in the utterance act of the preacher's locutionary acts. The ministry of the early church and Paul demonstrate their dependence on God's empowerment in the proclamation of the gospel. By using SAT's understanding of the utterance act in locutionary acts, God's role can be expressed and explained as providing compulsion to speak and anointed speaking.

Propositional Act: Text-Driven Content

Along with the locutionary characteristics of godly compulsion and empowerment, the content (propositional act) of Christian preaching is distinctively theocentric. The characteristic of theocentric content means that all propositions, the referring and predicating expressions of each sentence, align with and serve God's truth and authority found in the Scriptures. If Christian preachers affirm the inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy of the Word of God, then they ought to construct every aspect of the sermon to serve the authority and sufficiency of the Bible. For example, the content of every illustration should be to clarify the biblical truth being expounded, and all the content of application should be derived from the preaching text.

The preacher's content should reflect his faithfulness to his biblically defined role of stewarding, witnessing to, serving, and heralding the Word of God. The benefit of the sermon's propositional content honoring and serving the text is the power, sufficiency, truthfulness, and conviction that is drawn from God's Word. Theocentric propositions provide the substance and authority to the illocutionary acts of preaching, resulting in godly assertions, commands, declarations, expressions, and promises. Theocentric content—propositions that align and attend to the purposes of the biblical text—is distinctive of biblical preaching's propositional acts.

What determines if a preacher's sermon content aligns and attends to scriptural authority, sufficiency, and truth? The simple answer is the preacher's theological framework. If the preacher's framework is responsible for the content of the

sermon, then what theological convictions must exist in a Christian theological framework? D.W. Beddington's provides a starting point in answering this question with his four core convictions of evangelicalism.⁴⁷ Beddington identifies four core convictions that have existed for centuries with different degrees of emphasis depending on historical, social, and theological contexts: conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism.

What theological convictions was Beddington summarizing when he used the terms conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism? He used conversionism to summarize the evangelical conviction that Christianity teaches the necessity for the sinner to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ and receive assured salvation. Activism represents the evangelical position that the converted should be committed to the salvation of others and the works of God. The devotion to the inspired Bible and belief that all spiritual truth is to be found in Scripture is biblicism. Finally, crucicentrism summarized the affirmation of Christ's substitutionary death on the cross for sinful humanity and the implications of salvation and sanctification.

Sermonic content constructed through such evangelical framework results in text-driven propositions that aim to explain the text, illustrate the text, and apply the biblical text. Since the Bible drives all truth and authority, the preacher constructs his propositional content to honor and serve God's purposes of declaring truth (biblicism), converting the sinner (conversionism), calling the believer to godly works and missions (activism), challenging the believer to live out the implications of the cross (crucicentrism) and exalting the accomplishments of Christ (crucicentrism). Evangelical preaching constructs theo-centric propositions that explains and applies God's inspired Word in order to call the hearer to salvation, sanctification, and motivation for good works.

⁴⁷D. W. Beddington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1988), 1–19.

In summary, the distinctive of godly content (propositional act) in Christian preaching requires a homiletical methodology constructed from an evangelical framework that produces text-driven propositions. Theo-centric propositional acts require that every proposition of the sermon, from the introduction to the conclusion, serves and satisfies the authority and sufficiency of the biblical text(s) being preached by the Christian preacher. The propositional content of the sermon is the building material used to construct sermons that proclaim the truthfulness and significance of the preaching text.

The distinctive of godly content through text-driven propositions, which helps distinguish biblical preaching from all other preaching, is found in a wide range of homiletical methodologies including, but not limited to: Robinson, York, Kuruvilla, Chapell, and Keller. In each of these homiletics, the author affirms the authority and sufficiency of God's Word (theo-centric propositions) for two essential tasks of preaching: text-driven exposition and application. The objective of the following survey is to identify the author's affirmation of Scripture's authority and sufficiency, along with a commitment to serve the text's purposes through exposition and application.

Haddon Robinson presents a theocentric preaching model in his book *Biblical Preaching* because he affirms the authority of God's Word and its ability and aim to convert and confront hearers. For Robinson, preaching must be the heralding or crying out of the Word, and "anything less cannot legitimately pass for Christian preaching."⁴⁸ He wrote, "Through the preaching of the Scripture, God encounters men and women to bring them to salvation (II Tim. 3:15) and to richness and ripeness of Christian character (II Tim. 3:16-17)."⁴⁹ Robinson identifies effective preaching as "biblical ideas brought

⁴⁸Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 18.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 19.

together into an overarching unity” with “aims to confront, convict, convert, and comfort men and women through the preaching of biblical concepts.”⁵⁰

His definition of expository preaching asserts a commitment to study and communicate biblical truth resulting in godly application: “Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.”⁵¹ Robinson defined the sermon as centered on the text, “Ideally each sermon is the explanation, interpretation, or application of a single dominant idea supported by other ideas, all drawn from one passage or several passages of Scripture.”⁵² He connected the authorial intent of the text with the substance of the sermon, “The thought of the biblical writer determines the substance of an expository sermon.”⁵³

Robinson emphasizes the authority of God’s infallible, inerrant, and eternal Word. He wrote, “Ultimately the authority behind preaching resides not in the preacher but in the biblical text. For that reason the expositor deals largely with an explanation of Scripture, so that he focuses the listener’s attention on the Bible.”⁵⁴ Robinson provides a question that should be asked of every preacher’s handling of Scripture, “Do you, as a preacher, endeavor to bend your thought to the Scriptures, or do you use the Scriptures to

⁵⁰Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 37.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 20.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 33.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 20.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 23.

support your thought?”⁵⁵ For if “a preacher fails to preach the Scriptures, he abandons his authority.”⁵⁶

Hershael York presents another example of a theocentric homiletic in *Preaching with Bold Assurance*. York’s definition of expository preaching encourages the sermon to be constructed around explaining and applying the biblical text, “Expository preaching is any kind of preaching that shows people the meaning of a biblical text and leads them to apply it to their lives.”⁵⁷ His definition is motivated by his belief that the Bible is God’s Word, “If the Bible is the Word of God, then preaching is speaking God’s words.”⁵⁸ He identifies the preacher’s affirmation of inspiration as a motivation of biblical preaching, “Preachers who are not convinced of the inspiration of the text will have no interest in telling others what it says.”⁵⁹

The commitment to the Word of God is an absolute necessity for York’s homiletic because of its sufficiency, truth, and benefit for the hearer. The preacher is text-driven because he “believes that only the Word can provide the kind of benefit that people really need. Other resources may prove helpful, but they cannot meet the deepest need of a person’s life: a restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ.”⁶⁰ York unashamedly identifies the evangelical conviction of biblicism in his homiletic:

A high view of Scripture means that the Bible is what God says, and what God says is what we must say when we preach. If a preacher mounts the pulpit with a conviction of the truth and sufficiency of the Word of God, his preaching will be

⁵⁵Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 20.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁷York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 33.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 22.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 18.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 19.

marked by passion and power. A high view of Scripture is the sine qua non of exposition.⁶¹

Along with speaking God's words, the preacher desires to apply God's Word. York wrote, "We don't want to fill their heads; we want the proclamation of the Word to grip their souls and motivate them to conform to the will of God. Our approach to the Bible and to preaching, therefore, has application as its ultimate goal."⁶² York develops this commitment by speaking of the sermon being "God's means (and therefore ours) to the ends of his purposes" of changing "the lives of our listeners by the Word that is preached."⁶³ Like the prophets and the apostles, we preach for a decision, not merely for information.⁶⁴

Another homiletic that produces theocentric sermonic content is Abraham Kuruvilla's *Privilege the Text*. He defines preaching as "not only the interpretation of an authoritative biblical text but also the relevant communication of a God-given message to real people living real lives with a real need for that message."⁶⁵ The "respect for the ancient text, as well as relevance for the modern audience" is foundational in his approach.⁶⁶

Kuruvilla described the nature of the Bible, "In sum, the prescriptive nature of the Bible renders it profitable for application in the life of its readers; its perennial standing projects its relevance across the span of time; its plurality enables a wide variety of valid application in any number of specific circumstances for a spectrum of discrete

⁶¹York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 19.

⁶²Ibid., 11.

⁶³Ibid., 17.

⁶⁴Ibid., 17.

⁶⁵Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!: A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 20.

⁶⁶Ibid., 25.

audiences in the future.”⁶⁷ Kuruvilla connects preaching with covenant renewal—the utilization of Scripture to re-align God’s people to God:

The fundamental thrust of Neh 8 is that Scripture reading with explanation leads to understanding, which in turn issues in joyful obedience (8:10-12, 17). This is at the core of covenant renewal; the reading and exposition of the biblical text in a corporate, ecclesial context, an event mediated by the preacher, culminates in application that readjusts the congregation to their God and his demands, and restores them in proper relation to him, thus reaffirming their status as those purchased and delivered by God.⁶⁸

Kuruvilla’s conviction about the orientation of Scripture shaped his approach to preaching. He wrote, “The Rule of Centrality points the interpreter to what God has done, is doing, and will do, in and through Christ, underscoring the pivotal nature Christology plays in the orientation of the canon.”⁶⁹ In the same manner that Christ orients the canon, the image of Christ orients preaching. All interpretation of the Bible must be in concord with this bedrock—the image of Christ portrayed by the canon.⁷⁰ His commitment to the image of Christ in preaching—“Christiconic”—illustrates the text-driven distinctive of his homiletic.

Christiconic interpretation and preaching aim at keeping the image of Christ, a pivotal part of the orientation of Scripture, as foundational. Kuruvilla defines Christiconic interpretation as “a reading of the text that sees each pericope as projecting facets of Christlikeness.”⁷¹ Christlikeness is the will of the Father because Christ is the only man who has lived in perfect obedience to God’s demands:

Since only one Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, perfectly met all of God’s demands, being without sin (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26), one may say that each pericope of the Bible is actually portraying a facet of Christlikeness, a segment of the image of

⁶⁷Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text*, 60.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 99.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 84.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 85.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 260.

Christ: what it means to fulfill the particular divine demand in that pericope after the manner of Christ. Thus, fulfilling that divine demand is part of what it means to be Christlike, and the Bible as a whole, the plenary collection of all its pericopes, canonically portrays the perfect humanity exemplified by Jesus Christ, God incarnate.⁷²

Christiconic interpretation must always lead to Christiconic application in which the preacher calls the hearer to obedience to God’s divine priorities, precepts, and practices, as demonstrated by Christ. Thus, the preaching of Scripture is not for the purpose of imparting information, but for transforming people by the power of the Holy Spirit—the changing of lives to conform to the image of Christ, by the instrumentality of God’s Word.⁷³ Christiconic preaching has the distinctive of godly content because of its commitment to the inspiration of Scripture, being text-driven, and including godly application, as seen in Kuruvilla’s summary:

Christiconic interpretation and preaching is Trinitarian in conception and operation. The text inspired by the Holy Spirit depicts Jesus Christ, the Son, to whose image mankind is to conform. In so conforming, the will of God the Father comes to pass and his kingdom is being brought about. In other words, the Holy Spirit employs the inspired text and empowers believers to live in more Christlike a fashion, thus aligning them to the will of the Father.⁷⁴

Bryan Chapell presents a preaching methodology in *Christ-Centered Preaching* committed to biblical exposition and application. He emphasizes exposition because “the preacher’s mission and calling is to explain to God’s people what the Bible means.”⁷⁵ Chapell’s approach reflects his theological conviction to allow “the text [to] govern the preacher.”⁷⁶ For him, every proposition in the sermon serves the exposition of the text—text-driven:

⁷²Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text*, 259–60.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 268.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 268.

⁷⁵Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 30.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 32.

However, these traditional categories can damage expository preaching if preachers do not see that explanation, illustration, and application are all essential components of opening and unfolding the meaning of a text. Explanation answers the question, What does this text say? Illustrations responds to, Show me what the text says. Application answers, What does the text mean to me? Ordinarily, each component has a vital role in establishing listener's full understanding of a text.⁷⁷

Along with expounding Scripture's truth, his homiletic is committed to applying the truth to the hearer. The dual commitment of exposition and application is asserted in his definition of expository preaching "as a message whose structure and thought are derived from a biblical text, that covers the scope of the text, and that explains the features and context of the text in order to disclose the enduring principles for faithful thinking, living, and worship intended by the Spirit, who inspired the text."⁷⁸ The sermon's objectives are not accomplished until the preacher gives "God's people his (God's) truth for their time."⁷⁹

The exposition of the text is not solely for understanding but also for the sanctification and salvation of the congregants. He wrote, "These priorities indicate that the goal of preaching is not merely to impart information but to provide the means of transformation ordained by a sovereign God that will affect the lives and destinies of eternal souls committed to a preacher's spiritual care."⁸⁰ Efficiency in the application is determined by the commitment of exposition, "Preaching that is true to Scripture converts, convicts, and eternally changes the souls of men and women because God's Word is the instrument of divine compulsion, not because preachers have any power in themselves to stimulate such godly transformations."⁸¹

⁷⁷Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 89.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 31.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 31.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 25.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 27.

Chapell utilizes a Christocentric approach in his text-driven exposition and application. Christ-centered preaching replaces futile harangues for human striving with exhortations to obey God as a loving response to the redeeming work of Jesus Christ and in thankful dependence on the divine enablement of his Spirit.⁸² He safeguards against Pharisaism by grounding application in the gospel of Christ, “However well-intended and biblically rooted a sermon’s instruction may be, if the message does not incorporate the motivation and enablement inherent in proper apprehension of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, the preacher proclaims mere Pharisaism. Preaching that is faithful to the whole of Scripture not only establishes God’s requirements but also highlights the redemptive truths that make holiness possible.”⁸³

Chapell’s approach to the exposition of Scripture includes a Christocentric lens, “In this sense, the entire Bible is Christ-centered because his redemptive work in all of its incarnational, atoning, rising, interceding, and reigning dimensions is the capstone of all of God’s revelation of his dealings with his people. Thus, no aspect of revelation can be thoroughly understood or explained in isolation from some aspect of Christ’s redeeming work.”⁸⁴ He explains Christocentric propositions in exposition,

Christ-centered preaching (whether it is referred to as preaching the cross, the message of grace, the gospel, God’s redemption, or a host of similar terms) reflects Paul’s intention to preach nothing “except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Just as Paul’s preaching involved more than the message of the incarnation and atonement—and yet kept all subjects in proper relation to God’s redemption through Christ—so also *Christ-centered preaching rightly understood does not seek to discover where Christ is mentioned in every text but to disclose where every text stands in relation to Christ.* The grace of God culminating in the person and work of Jesus unfolds in many dimensions throughout the pages of Scripture. The goal of the preacher is not to find novel ways of identifying Christ in every text (or naming

⁸²Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 20.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 19.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 276.

Jesus in every sermon) but to show how each text manifests God’s grace in order to prepare and enable his people to embrace the hope provided by Christ.⁸⁵

The final example of a text-driven model is by Timothy Keller in *Preaching*. In his book, Keller asserts a high view of Scripture and its authority: “A full confidence and rich grasp of the authority and inspiration of the Bible is absolutely crucial for a sustained, life-changing ministry of Bible teaching and preaching.”⁸⁶ Unless your understanding of the Bible—and your confidence in its inspiration and authority—are deep and comprehensive, you will not be able to do the hard work necessary to understand and present it convincingly.⁸⁷

Because of his high view of Scripture, Keller emphasizes expository preaching that “unleashes our belief in the whole Bible as God’s authoritative, living and active Word.”⁸⁸ He places explanation of Scripture as one of the great tasks of preaching, “The purpose of preaching is to preach the Scripture with its own insights, directives, and teachings. Along the way, as Perkins says, we can and must use all the ‘arts’ to help our hearers understand the biblical author’s meaning. All of this is done in subservience to the first great task of preaching: to preach God’s Word, and to let listeners sense its very authority.”⁸⁹

Keller’s second great task of preaching is bringing to bear the authority and truth of God’s Word. He wrote, “So there are two things we must do. As we preach, we are to serve and love the truth of God’s Word and also to serve and love the people before us. We serve the Word by preaching the text clearly and preaching the gospel every time.

⁸⁵Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 279.

⁸⁶Keller, *Preaching*, 32.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 33.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 35.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 29.

We reach the people by preaching to the culture and to the heart.”⁹⁰ Keller illustrates the necessity of application using wheat, “It is not enough to just harvest the wheat; it must be prepared in some edible form or it can’t nourish and delight.”⁹¹ His homiletic is built around the love of God’s Word and the love of people, which are both expressed through exposition and application.

Keller’s commitment to being text-driven is also seen in his Christocentric conviction to include the gospel, his defined center of revelation, as necessary for both tasks of preaching:

These are the two tasks of preaching, and there is one key to both of them—preaching Christ. This is not a discrete task to add to the other two but is rather the essence of how you do each of them. Remember that biblical accuracy and Christocentricity are the same thing to Paul. You can’t properly preach any text—putting it into its rightful place in the whole Bible—unless you show how its themes find their fulfillment in the person of Christ. Likewise, you can’t really reach and restructure the affections of the heart unless you point through the biblical principles to the beauty of Jesus himself, showing clearly how the particular truth in your text can be practiced only through faith in the work of Christ.⁹²

The examples above demonstrate homiletical approaches that accomplish the distinctive of godly content—text-driven propositions—that is necessary for the theocentric locutions of biblical preaching. The models are committed to the sermon’s propositions serving and aligning with the biblical text through explanation and application. The centrality of the Scriptures in the sermon results from each author’s conviction that the Bible is God’s inspired Word that is sufficient and authoritative.

Conclusion

The locutionary act consists of two acts: utterance and propositional. The locutionary act initiates all speech acts and provides the content of the illocutionary act.

⁹⁰Keller, *Preaching*, 23.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 14.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 21–22.

For preaching, the utterance act is strengthened by God's compelling to proclaim and empowering the proclamation. The propositional act of preaching is text-driven resulting in every proposition (explanation, application, illustration) serving and aligning with the biblical text preached. The chapter's survey of different preaching methodologies shows text-driven convictions and commitments by multiple homiletics: Robinson, York, Kuruvilla, Chapell, and Keller. The locutionary acts of preaching are theocentric because they are compelled, empowered, and driven by God.

How does this chapter on theocentric locutions help explain and express the theology of preaching from chapter two? By using SAT's understanding of the locutionary act to show how preaching's theocentric locutions express and explain the centrality of God's Word, authority, and empowerment. First, SAT's explanation of locutionary acts, specifically the propositional act, gives biblical preaching a chance to explain and emphasize the centrality of God's Word. Text-driven propositions that serve and align with the Word of God provide the content for preaching's illocutionary acts. The authority and sufficiency of the biblical text is the message that is promised, expressed, asserted, commanded, and declared by the illocutionary acts. A preacher cannot accomplish his God-ordained task without his propositional acts being text-driven.

Second, locutionary acts help express God's work in the preacher. The text-driven propositions are the product of the Spirit illuminating the preacher's understanding of God's Word. Along with illumination, God compels and empowers the preacher's utterances that mediate Scripture's authority and sufficiency. God empowering and compelling the preacher's theocentric utterances enables the preacher to steward, witness to, herald, and serve the Word of God through public proclamation. God's work is present in the delivery of the sermon (the utterance act) and will continue through the speech act by authenticating, convicting, and applying the sermon to the hearers (illocution and perlocution). God's anointing of the preacher's utterances is developed in chapter five's discussion of the rules of illocutionary acts and their satisfaction.

CHAPTER 5
ILLOCUTIONARY ACT IN PREACHING

In his conclusion on the essential nature of preaching, Mounce asked, “How can God reveal Himself to me in the present through an event which took place in the past?”¹ He answers, “As the preacher proclaims the divine act of redemption, the barriers of time are somehow transcended and that supreme event of the past is once again taking place. God’s historic Self-disclosure has become a present actuality.”² He supports this claim with a quote from John Knox,

Preaching does more than recount and explain the ancient event. The Spirit makes the ancient event in a very real sense an event even now transpiring, and the preaching is a medium of the Spirit’s action in doing so. In the preaching, when it is truly itself, the event is continuing or is recurring. God’s revealing action in Christ is, still or again, actually taking place.³

Thus, preaching is that timeless link between God’s great redemptive Act and man’s apprehension of it.⁴ It is the medium through which God contemporizes His historic Self-disclosure and offers man the opportunity to respond in faith.⁵ Preaching is God declaring His Word about Himself to humanity so that what God accomplished in Christ can become a reality for all who repent and believe. Because preaching utilizes the universal nature of oral communication (locution, illocution, perlocution), the theory of

¹Robert Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1960), 152.

²Ibid., 153.

³Ibid., 153.

⁴Ibid., 153.

⁵Ibid., 153.

illocutionary acts provides a linguistic explanation of how God is speaking through the preacher. The explanation is that the Spirit fulfills many linguistic components of preaching's illocutionary acts resulting in Spirit-filled illocutions delivered through the preacher.

The function, or force, of a verbal expression is known as the illocutionary act, which Bach and Harnish describe as the “doing” of speech.⁶ Preaching consists of four of Searle's five primitive functions of verbal communication: assertives, commissives, directives, and expressives. Biblical preaching's theocentric content (locutionary act) is asserted, commanded, promised, and expressed by the preacher in the sermon for the hearer's understanding.

The force determines the speaker's specific meaning of the propositional content and answers the question of what the speaker is *doing in saying* such propositional content in this specific circumstance. SAT was birthed out of answering this question by providing a linguistic theory that explains and systematizes speech functions.⁷ To systematize illocutionary acts, Searle classified all illocutionary acts into five main categories: assertions (stating how things are), directives (ordering things to be done), expressives (conveying attitudes and feelings), commissives (committing someone to do something), and declaratives (changing reality with an utterance). The five

⁶Kent Bach and Robert Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1982), 3; John L. Austin and James O. Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, 2nd ed. (1962; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 94.

⁷John R. Searle, *The Philosophy of Language*, Oxford Readings in Philosophy (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), chap. 1; Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*; A. P. Martinich, ed., *The Philosophy of Language*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), chap.8; John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 1969); John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. (1979; repr., Cambridge University Press, 1999).

primitive categories represent many illocutionary verbs that accomplish many functions to differing degrees and variances based on an assortment of distinctions.⁸

The speaker can do many different illocutionary acts with the same propositional content. Once again, Allison's five sentences have the referent of "Jesus Christ" and the predicate of "come again," yet, different illocutionary acts:

1. Jesus Christ has come again.
2. Jesus Christ, come again! (God speaking)
3. I, Jesus Christ, will come again.
4. Oh! Jesus Christ has come again!
5. Jesus Christ hereby comes again. (God speaking; at this utterance, Jesus Christ returns.)⁹

While the propositional content is the same in all five sentences above, the illocutionary acts are all different: (1) assertion, (2) directive, (3) commissive, (4) expressive, and (5) declarative. The reason for differing acts is that the force is determined by the speaker's intentional use of the propositional content. The speaker desires for the hearer to understand how he uses the content, determining whether the force is a statement, question, declarative, promise, or expressive.

This chapter explores the relationship between illocutionary acts and preaching to establish what God is doing through the preacher's uttered proposition. Using SAT, this chapter shows that God reveals Himself and His demands as the preacher asserts His truths, commands His directives, promises His faithfulness, and expresses godly attitudes and emotions. The chapter establishes what preaching is doing by surveying NT terminology for preaching, introducing and discussing illocutionary acts, affirming the

⁸In chapter 6 of *Meaning and Speech Acts*, Vanderveken provides diagrams of the illocutionary categories that help visualize the commonality and diversity within each illocutionary family. Daniel Vanderveken, *Meaning and Speech Acts*, vol. 1, *Principles of Language Use*, (Cambridge University Press, 2009), chap 6. See figures A1 thru A5 in appendix.

⁹Gregg Allison, "Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture," *Theological Research Exchange Network*, no. ETS-4542 (November 19, 1993), 11.

Spirit's presence in preaching's illocutions, and working through Searle's illocutionary taxonomy in order to present some sample illocutions of preaching.

New Testament Preaching Terminology

Two questions have to be answered before examples of illocutionary acts of preaching can be given: What is preaching? What are illocutionary acts? The former is answered in this section with a brief survey of NT terminology used for preaching. The aim is to provide a biblical description of preaching that can then be linguistically explained by SAT, showing how oral communication is a vehicle for preaching.

With the amount of preaching included in the NT, "it is all the more amazing that it nowhere offers an explicit discussion of what preaching actually is."¹⁰ On top of that, the NT uses thirty-three verbs to express the ministry of God's Word, known as preaching.¹¹ The variety of verbs signifies that preaching in the NT consisted of more verbal functions, or illocutionary acts, than just stating truth.¹² "Preaching" in the NT therefore covers a wide variety of activities, including proclamation before an assembly of people and public discourse just short of a debate.¹³

¹⁰K. Runia, "What Is Preaching According to the New Testament," *Tyndale Bulletin* 29 (January 1, 1978): 6.

¹¹The thirty three verbs listed by Kittel are: *keryssein, legein, lalein, apophthengesthai, homilein, diegeisthai, ekdiegeisthai, exegeisthai, dialegesthai, diermeneuein, gnorizein, angelein, apangelien, anangelein, diangelein, exangelein, katangelein, euangelizesthai, parresiazomia, martyrein, epimartyrein, diamartyrein, peithein, homologein, krazein, propeteuiein, didaskein, paradidomi, nouthetein, ton logon orthotomein, parakalein, elenkein, and epitiman*. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 703. Silva also discusses the variety of preaching terms under his listing of "κηρύσσω." Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 2:679.

¹²See Peter Adam, *Speaking God's Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2004), 74-75; Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3:697-714; Runia, "What Is Preaching According to the New Testament," 20; Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:677-81.

¹³Al Fasol, *Essentials for Biblical Preaching: An Introduction to Basic Sermon Preparation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 14-15.

Peter Adam demonstrates that NT verbs include more than telling facts or presenting information by classifying the verbs into five categories: information, declaration, exhortation, persuasion, and conversation.¹⁴ Adam concludes, “Only a few of the words have to do with providing or passing on information. A merely didactic form of the ministry of the Word is inadequate. A high number of the words have to do with exhortation and persuasion, which have as their purpose a response within the hearers.”¹⁵

Adam’s conclusion is right; the NT uses various verbs to express the manifold of illocutionary acts in preaching.¹⁶ The following NT verbs and nouns demonstrate that preaching was more than declaring or teaching the truth but included the illocutionary force of the presence of God’s kingdom.¹⁷ The terminology below highlights that preaching has an indicative nature by which God’s truth is declared and an imperative nature by which understanding such truth calls one to respond accordingly.

One of the most prominent verbs in the NT for preaching is κηρύσσω (transliterated *kē russō*), meaning to proclaim an event.¹⁸ According to the philologists, it has an old-Persian root *xrausa*, meaning to cry loud and clear, as when one cries out a

¹⁴Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 75–76.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁶See also Fasol, *Essentials for Biblical Preaching*, 14–15; Sidney Greidanus, *Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 6–7; Runia, *The Sermon under Attack*, 25–26; Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament.”

¹⁷The nouns and verbs selected do not represent every verb and noun used for the preacher, the act of preaching, and the content of preaching in the NT. The choice of nouns and verbs surveyed was determined based on the argument of this chapter that preaching is “doing” more than stating facts. For example, the verb λαλέω is not covered because of the generic meaning of “to say.” This survey does not aim to be comprehensive but rather selective in order to highlight the illocutionary nature of preaching. The following works also influenced the words selected: Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul on Preaching* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), chap. 2; Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, chap. 4; John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961); Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*; Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*; Fasol, *Essentials for Biblical Preaching*, 14–15; Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament.”

¹⁸Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3:703–13; Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:674–81; Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament,” 7–9.

message in the presence of many people.¹⁹ The Greek world outside of the NT describes a herald's activity and carries the basic meaning of crying out, proclaiming, declaring, and announcing.²⁰ In the Septuagint, the verb appears thirty-three times; however, "there is no single Hebrew equivalent; it is used for a number of verbs and expressions that denote 'loud crying.'"²¹ The herald's message is not his own; the message originates from his sender or master.²² His task is to deliver his master's message in the master's authority without any of his own opinion or preference.

The verb is used sixty-one times in the NT, with the declaration's object primarily being the gospel, the good news of the kingdom, or Jesus Christ.²³ The verb occurs in Matthew, Mark, and Luke with John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples, all declaring the arrival of God's kingdom with a call to repentance.²⁴ In Pauline literature, it is characteristically used for preaching the gospel, a proclamation about Jesus Christ as a prerequisite for faith.²⁵ The NT usage of κηρύσσω demonstrates that proclaiming Jesus Christ with a call of repentance and belief was a characteristic of NT preaching.

Runia speaks of the dual nature of κηρύσσω, "It is the announcement of an event, but at the same time also of what this event has done or does to the listener. In the act of κηρύσσειν the event becomes reality for the listener."²⁶ For example, when the NT

¹⁹Runia, "What Is Preaching According to the New Testament," 7.

²⁰Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3:697.

²¹*Ibid.*, 3:700.

²²*Ibid.*, 3:687–88. The noun, κηρυξ, only appears three times which leads some to conclude that the NT is emphasizing the work of the herald more than the position, or man. See Runia, "What Is Preaching According to the New Testament," 8; Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3:683–714; Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:677–78.

²³Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:677.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 2:680–81.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 2:679–81.

²⁶Runia, "What Is Preaching According to the New Testament," 8.

uses κηρύσσω for the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the word “preaching” conveys both the gospel’s announcement and the reality of the presence of God’s kingdom.²⁷ One’s response to the herald’s declaration and the good news of Jesus Christ will result either in salvation or judgment. Runia marries declaration and event,

Indeed, both belong together: *declaration* and *event*, this particular event: what God has done in Jesus Christ. But then we must also add: wherever this event is proclaimed, it inaugurates what this event has accomplished. The new situation, brought about by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, now becomes reality for every listener who accepts it in faith.²⁸

Before moving on, a word about the related noun, κήρυγμα (transliterated kērugma), is appropriate despite the limited amount of usage (nine times in NT). Stott discusses Dodd’s and Mounce’s treatment of κήρυγμα before giving his simplified understanding of it as the “proclamation” of Jesus as Savior and Lord and the “appeal” to come to Jesus in repentance and faith.²⁹ Like the verb, the noun includes a double

²⁷The double emphasis of declaring an event and inaugurating a new reality is discussed by Friedrich (TDNT, Vol. 3, 703-714) and Runia (What is preaching, 8-9). Runia cautions the reader against what he deems a “sweeping” conclusion, “Friedrich draws a rather sweeping conclusion from this (usage of the verb “κηρύσσω” being much greater than the noun κήρυγμα), as to the theological significance of the terms. He writes: ‘Emphasis does not attach to the κήρυγμα, as though Christianity contained something decisively new in content—a new doctrine, or a new view of God, or a new cultus. The decisive things is the action, the proclamation itself. For it accomplishes that which was expected by the OT prophets. The divine intervention takes place through the proclamation. Hence the proclamation itself is the new thing. Through it the Βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ comes.’ I do not believe that this conclusion can be maintained in the light of the NT evidence.” Runia then offers his corrective position, “The New Testament nowhere says that the act of proclamation performs the miracle of salvation. It is *not the act itself* that does it, but the particular message that is proclaimed, namely, what God has done in Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, on the previous page Friedrich himself has said that in the NT κηρύσσειν is the ‘declaration of an event.’ Indeed, both belong together: *declaration* and *event*, this particular event: what God has done in Jesus Christ. But then we must also add: wherever this event is proclaimed, it inaugurates what this event has accomplished. The new situation, brought about by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, now becomes reality for every listener who accepts it in faith.” I agree with Runia’s conclusion that the proclamation is not the saving act but rather the inauguration of the kingdom of God in which one either accepts the invitation of repentance and belief, resulting salvation, or one denies the invitation, resulting in judgment. The message brings the new reality which brings the potential of salvation or judgement because of the message that is proclaimed. In conclusion, both Runia and Friedrich understand “κηρύσσω” as a verb that has a double meaning: the declaration of Jesus Christ and the act of calling the hearer to repentance and faith. The verb demonstrates that preaching is an event that uses a biblical locution to achieve kingdom illocutions.

²⁸Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament,” 9.

²⁹Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait*, 38–42. Dodd defines the noun as “a proclamation of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in an eschatological setting from which those facts derive their saving significance.” C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1937), 31. Dodd identifies the following components as making up the κήρυγμα: “(1) The prophecies are fulfilled, and the New Age is inaugurated by the coming of Christ; (2) He was born of the

meaning: the proclamation of the saving good news of Jesus and the appeal for such salvation to be a reality. Mounce compares the duality of the noun to the Declaration of Independence:

Thus we conclude that the term kerygma as used in the New Testament has a twofold connotation. In some instances it refers primarily to the content of the message; in others, to the act of proclaiming. At the same time it resists any exclusive label. It is neither subject matter alone nor simply the act of proclaiming. It is the proclamation viewed as a whole. Similar to the Declaration of Independence, it demands an existential, not a static, frame of reference. It is The Proclamation.³⁰

The second verb of importance for understanding NT preaching is εὐαγγελίζω (transliterated euaggelizō), meaning “to bring good news or proclaim the gospel.”³¹ This verb’s OT background includes the idea of heralding Yahweh’s universal victory over the world and His kingly rule.³² The bringing of good news accomplished more than information sharing, “The act of proclamation is itself the dawn of the new era. Hence it is easy to understand the special significance that attaches to the messenger of the good news. With his arrival on the scene and the delivery of his message, salvation, redemption, and peace become a reality.”³³

In the NT, the verb is used fifty-five times, primarily in Luke, Acts, and Pauline literature, for the missional preaching of Jesus’ disciples bringing the good news

seed of David; (3) He died according to the Scriptures, to deliver us out of the present evil age; (4) He was buried; (5) He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures; (6) He is exalted at the right hand of God, as Son of God and Lord of quick and dead; and (7) He will come again as Judge and Savior of men.” Ibid., 18. Mounce’s critique of Dodd’s work is that Dodd presented the κηρυγμα as some “sort of stereotyped sixheaded sermon” rather than “a systematic statement of the theology of the early church.” Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching*, 61, 64, 76. Thus, Mounce defines the κηρυγμα as: “(1) A proclamation of the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus, seen as the fulfillment of prophecy and involving man’s responsibility. (2) The resultant evaluation of Jesus as both Lord and Christ. (3) A summons to repent and receive forgiveness of sins. Let us now develop the total message under these heads.” Ibid., 77.

³⁰Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching*, 55.

³¹Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:707–20; Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:306–12.

³²Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:307.

³³Ibid., 2:308.

of salvation in Jesus Christ.³⁴ The verb uses the objects of him (Christ), Jesus, Christ Jesus, Lord Jesus, name of Jesus, riches of Christ, resurrection, and kingdom of God.³⁵

Like the previous verb, κηρύσσω, separating the content and the process is complicated:

Always however, just as in the case of κηρύσσειν, it is the proclamation or preaching *of an event*. The preaching is not itself the saving event, but it is the revelation of the saving event. But as its revelation it also makes this saving event a reality for all who hear and believe the message. Friedrich is undoubtedly correct when he writes: “εὐαγγελίζεσθαι is not just speaking and preaching; it is proclamation with full authority and power.”³⁶

The noun, εὐαγγέλιον, is insightful to the nature of NT preaching also. The noun is used in the gospels for the good news of the arrival of Jesus Christ and the salvation He brings.³⁷ The apostle Paul used it for the good news of salvation through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.³⁸ Εὐαγγέλιον is used with multiple NT verbs (κηρύσσω, καταγγέλλω, and λαλέω) and leads to a multitude of kingdom objectives: leads to faith (Rom 1:16-17; Phil 1:27), brings salvation and life (Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 15:2), judgment (Rom 2:16), reveals God’s righteousness (Rom 1:17), brings the fulfillment of hope (Col 1:5, 23), intervenes in human lives, and creates churches.³⁹

The noun carries the same duality of declaration and event in Pauline literature: “As used by Paul, however, εὐαγγέλιον does not mean only the content of what is preached, but also the act, process, and execution of the proclamation. Content and process of preaching are inseparable (cf. Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 9:14, 18). For in the very act of proclamation its content becomes reality and brings about the salvation it

³⁴Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:719–21; Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:308.

³⁵Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:720.

³⁶Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament,” 10.

³⁷Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:309.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 2:309.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 2:310.

communicates.”⁴⁰ The noun’s usage in the NT strengthens the argument that the preaching event was theocentric in content with the kingdom force of initiating a new reality for the audience.

The third verb found in the NT for preaching is μαρτυρέω (transliterated *martureō*) which is to witness, testify, speak, or approve.⁴¹ It is not surprising that the apostle John accounts for forty-five of the seventy-six NT uses because the verb is better adapted for his witness motif than the dramatic and efficacious herald cry.⁴² The idea is that one is testifying to Jesus Christ, whether that be John the Baptist pointing to Jesus, Jesus testifying about Himself, or the disciples testifying back to Christ.⁴³ The witness is concerned with establishing truth based on what they have seen or heard, similarly to a courtroom setting.⁴⁴

The fourth verb of importance for NT preaching is διδάσκω (transliterated *didaskō*) which in the broadest sense means to teach.⁴⁵ The Greek background of the word is to teach, instruct, impart information, pass on knowledge, or acquire a skill.⁴⁶ In the OT, “the particular object of διδάσκειν, however, is the will of God in its declarations and demands.”⁴⁷ Both the announcement of the good news and also the “unfolding or the exposition of its meaning” are expressed with διδάσκω.⁴⁸ Similarly to κηρύσσω and

⁴⁰Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:310.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 3:234–45.

⁴²Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3:703–4; Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 3:238.

⁴³Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 3:241–43.

⁴⁴Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament,” 10.

⁴⁵Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:138.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 2:135.

⁴⁷Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:136.

⁴⁸Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament,” 15.

εὐαγγελίζω, in the sense of declaring the good news of Jesus and inaugurating a new reality, διδάσκω declares, unpacks, and exegetes that new reality's doctrines and demands.

Παρακαλεῶ (transliterated parakaleō) is the fifth verb and broadly means to address someone for prayer, exhortation, or comfort in its over hundred usages in NT.⁴⁹ Beneficial to this study is the idea of exhortation: “The use of παρακαλεῖν for “to exhort,” serves in the NT to denote missionary proclamation and also as a kind of formula to introduce pastoral admonition.”⁵⁰ Runia says of παρακαλεῶ: “It is indicative of missionary preaching, ‘the wooing proclamation of salvation in the apostolic preaching.’ But it is also an aspect of congregational preaching, ‘the admonition which is addressed to those already won and which is designed to lead them to conduct worthy of the gospel.’”⁵¹ The verb supports the idea that NT preaching consisted of a dual nature of declaring indicative truth (Jesus Christ) and imperative force (the call to salvation and sanctification).

This brief and limited survey of NT preaching terminology above demonstrates that NT preaching involves proclaiming the gospel, inaugurating a new reality (kingdom of God), and exhorting the hearer to repent and believe. In summary, preaching in the NT includes declaring (κηρύσσω, εὐαγγελίζω, διδάσκω, παρακαλεῶ) and testifying (μαρτυρέω) to the good news of Jesus Christ (εὐαγγέλιον, κήρυγμα) that introduces or reminds the audience of the presence of God's kingdom along with the necessary response of repenting and believing. Preaching declares what God has done and said

⁴⁹Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 5:794–99; Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 3:627–233.

⁵⁰Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 5:799. Examples of exhortations in the NT introduced by παρακαλεῶ are Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 10:1, 1 Thessalonians 4:1, Philipians 4:2, Ephesians 4:1, 1 Timothy 2:1, 1 Peter 2:11 and 5:1. Ibid., 5:795-796.

⁵¹Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament,” 18–19. See also Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 3:630–31.

while also being what God is doing today through the proclamation of His historical revelation.

While this brief and limited summary of five words has outlined the primary contours of NT preaching, derived from NT terminology, the other NT words associated with the task of preaching also merit attention. Indeed, even a minimal notation of these terms may be correlated helpfully with Searle's aforementioned categories of illocutionary acts. Adam classified the relevant NT terms into five categories.⁵² The table below (Table 1) shows the correlations between Adam's analysis and Searle's proposal. The table supports the idea that preaching is doing more than transferring information and is accomplishing the kingdom illocutions of asserting, commanding, expressing, and promising God's Word.

Mounce is correct when he stated that "as the preacher proclaims the divine act of redemption, the barriers of time are somehow transcended and that supreme event of the past is once again taking place. God's historic Self-disclosure has become a present actuality."⁵³ The question now is whether there is a linguistic explanation of how God uses the universal rules of oral communication to make His revelation a present proclamation through His herald, witness, teacher, and bearer of good news? How has God created and ordained verbal speech, specifically preaching, with the capabilities of proclaiming truth, ushering in a new reality of the kingdom of God, and exhorting one to repent and believe in Christ? What role does the Spirit play that separates preaching from other oral communications? What makes preaching's illocutions Spirit-filled?

⁵²Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 76.

⁵³Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching*, 153.

Table 1. Similarities in Adam's and Searle's categories

<i>Adam's category</i>	<i>New Testament Verbs</i>	<i>Searle's SAT category</i>
Words of information	Teach, instruct, point out, make known, remind	Assertives
Words of declaration	Preach, proclaim, cry out, testify, bear witness, declare, write, read, pass on, set forth	Assertives, Directives, Expressives
Words of exhortation	Call, denounce, warn, rebuke, command, give judgment, encourage, appeal, urge, ask	Directives
Words of persuasion	Explain, make clear, prove, guard, debate, contend, refute, reason, persuade, convince, insist, defend, confirm, stress	Assertives, Directives, Commissives
Words of conversation	Say, speak, talk, answer, reply, give an answer	Assertives, Expressives, Directives, Commissives

Definition of Illocutionary Acts

Since one cannot state propositional content without some force of intention, then “to perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and *eo ipso* to perform

an *illocutionary act*.”⁵⁴ The father of SAT, J. L. Austin, defined illocutionary acts as the “performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something; I call the act performed an ‘illocution’ and shall refer to the doctrine of the different types of function of language here in question as the doctrine of ‘illocutionary force.’”⁵⁵ The concept of illocutionary acts requires the speaker’s intended force to be included in the verbal expression’s meaning.⁵⁶

By uttering sentences in the contexts of use of natural languages, speakers attempt to perform illocutionary acts such as statements, questions, declarations, requests, promises, apologies, orders, offers, and refusals, and their attempts to perform illocutionary acts are part of what they mean and intend to get the hearers to understand in the context of their utterances.⁵⁷ John Searle provides a helpful list of English verbs associated with illocutionary acts: “Some of the English verbs and verb phrases associated with illocutionary acts are: state, assert, describe, warn, remark, comment, command, order, request, criticize, apologize, censure, approve, welcome, promise, express approval, and express regret.”⁵⁸ The illocutionary force determines how the speaker wants his expression to be understood.

Since the same propositional content can be used for multiple illocutionary acts, SAT identifies the distinctions hearers naturally use to determine the expression’s function. The difference between asserting and testifying or conjecturing and predicting

⁵⁴Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 98.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 99–100.

⁵⁶See Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “The Semantics of Biblical Literature: Truth and Scripture’s Diverse Literary Forms,” in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, ed. Carson and Woodbridge, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 89; A. P. Martinich, ed., *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 124.

⁵⁷Vanderveken, *Meaning and Speech Acts*, 7.

⁵⁸Searle, *The Philosophy of Language*, 39.

is “determined once its illocutionary point, its preparatory conditions, the mode of achievement of its illocutionary point, the degree of strength of its illocutionary point, its propositional content conditions, its sincerity conditions, and the degree of strength of its sincerity conditions are specified.”⁵⁹ Martinich used the expression of a bull about to charge to illustrate the multiple illocutionary acts possible with the same content,

For example, the rhetic act of saying that a certain bull is about to charge (expressed by uttering the sentence, ‘That bull is about to charge’) could be involved with the performance of various illocutionary acts, depending upon the intentions of the speaker and the circumstances of the utterance. An expert about bulls might state that the bull is about to charge or maybe warning someone about that; an inexperienced observer might guess or conjecture that the bull is about to charge; someone else may be using the sentence to make a bet.⁶⁰

In summary, illocutionary acts are the force added to the speaker’s propositional content so that the hearer can determine the speaker’s intention. The five primary categories of illocutionary force are assertions, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Differences between the five main categories and the sub-categories of each illocutionary act are determined through many distinctions such as, but not limited to, illocutionary point, its preparatory conditions, the degree of strength of its illocutionary point, its propositional content conditions, its sincerity conditions, and the degree of strength of its sincerity conditions.

Aim of Illocutionary Acts

What is the aim of an illocutionary act, and what determines if an illocutionary act is successful? The aim of an illocutionary act is for the hearer to understand the function or force of the verbal expression. Austin coined the term “uptake” in his 1955 William James Lectures at Harvard to summarize “bringing about the understanding of

⁵⁹John R. Searle and Daniel Vanderveken, “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” in *Logic, Thought and Action*, ed. Daniel Vanderveken, Logic, Epistemology, and the Unity of Science (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2005), 124.

⁶⁰Martinich, *The Philosophy of Language*, 3rd ed., 117–18.

the meaning and of the force of the locution.”⁶¹ Vanhoozer defines illocutionary uptake as “understanding not merely the meaning of a sentence but the force with which that meaning is to be taken. Unless the hearer recognizes my intent to warn, he has not truly understood my sentence, even if he knows what it ‘means’ (its propositional content). Understanding, therefore, is knowing what the sentence means and what it counts as.”⁶² Vanhoozer uses a warning to illustrate illocutionary aim, “If I say, ‘My house is on fire,’ a correct understanding would involve recognizing that my intent is not to state an interesting fact about my domicile but to warn its inhabitants to flee and to request help.”⁶³

Searle used the phrase “illocutionary effect” similarly to Austin’s uptake:

One of the most extraordinary is this: If I am trying to tell someone something, then (assuming certain conditions are satisfied) as soon as he recognizes that I am trying to tell him something and exactly what it is I am trying to tell him, I have succeeded in telling it to him. Furthermore, unless he recognizes that I am trying to tell him something and what I am trying to tell him, I do not fully succeed in telling it to him. In the case of illocutionary acts we succeed in doing what we are trying to do by getting our audience to recognize what we are trying to do. But the ‘effect’ on the hearer is not a belief or response, it consist simply in the hearer understanding the utterance of the speaker. It is this effect that I have been calling illocutionary effect.⁶⁴

Searle emphasized that illocutionary aim is different from perlocutionary success: “But, I wish to claim, the intended effect of meaning something is that the hearer should know the illocutionary force and propositional content of the utterance, not that he should respond or behave in such and such ways.”⁶⁵ The illocutionary act of asserting aims that

⁶¹Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 117.

⁶²Vanhoozer, “The Semantics of Biblical Literature: Truth and Scripture’s Diverse Literary Forms,” 89.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 89.

⁶⁴Searle, *Speech Acts*, 47.

⁶⁵Searle, *The Philosophy of Language*, 8.

the hearer understands that the locutionary content is expressed as truth but not that the hearer accepts or believes the content to be right (perlocutionary act).

Allison clarifies what makes a command successful, “Thus, a successful directive consists in a hearer understanding the propositional content of the command, warning, etc., and grasping the fact that the utterance is an attempt to get him/her to do something. Whether the hearer actually obeys the command or flees the danger expressed in the warning is irrelevant from the point of view of the speech act’s successfulness. As long as the locutionary and illocutionary aspects are recognized, the speech act is successful.”⁶⁶

Can an illocutionary act be deemed successful if the desired perlocutionary effect never occurs? Allison answered this question, “On this point, speech act theorists are in agreement. What constitutes a successful speech act is not the actualization of a certain intended response; rather, it is the satisfaction of the four conditions—essential, sincerity, propositional, and preparatory—of the illocutionary aspect, leading to the comprehensibility of the propositional content (locutionary aspect) and the force (illocutionary aspect) of the speech act by the hearer.”⁶⁷ The aim and success of illocutionary acts are for the hearer to understand what the speaker is doing with the locutionary content, not the hearer’s response or reaction.

Components of Variation in Illocutionary Acts

By what criteria does one determine the difference between a report, a prediction, and a promise? When one attempts to answer that question, one discovers that there are several quite different principles of distinction; that is, there are different kinds

⁶⁶Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 16.

⁶⁷Ibid., 15.

of differences that enable us to say that the force of this utterance is different from the force of that utterance.⁶⁸ For Searle, “there are (at least) twelve significant dimensions of variation in which illocutionary acts differ one from another.”⁶⁹ Speech Act theorists use these “dimensions of variation” to create taxonomies that identify the differences between different kinds of speech acts.⁷⁰ For this chapter’s purpose, six components of Searle’s work are covered before working through his taxonomy: illocutionary point, mode of achievement, psychological state, propositional content, direction of fit, and degree of strength.⁷¹

⁶⁸Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 2.

⁶⁹Ibid., 2. Searle’s identifies twelve significant dimensions of variation in which illocutionary acts differ one from another: (1) Differences in the point (or purpose) of the (type of) act; (2) Differences in the direction of fit between words and the world; (3) Differences in expressed psychological states; (4) Differences in the force or strength with which the illocutionary point is presented; (5) Differences in the status or position of the speaker and hearer as these bear on the illocutionary force of the utterance; (6) Differences in the way the utterance relates to the interests of the speaker and the hearer; (7) Differences in relations to the rest of the discourse; (8) Differences in propositional content that are determined by illocutionary force indicating devices; (9) Differences between those acts that must always be speech acts, and those that can be, but need not be performed as speech acts; (10) Differences between those acts that require extra-linguistic institutions for their performance and those that do not; (11) Differences between those acts where the corresponding illocutionary verb has a performative use and those where it does not; and, (12) Differences in the style of performance of the illocutionary act. Ibid., 2-8.

⁷⁰Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, chap. 1; Searle and Vanderveken, “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” sec. 3; Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” pt. C.

⁷¹The six components were selected on the basis of a comparison of the works of Searle (*Expression and Meaning*, chap.1), Vanderveken (*Meaning and Speech Acts*, vol. 1, chap.4), and Allison (“Speech Act Theory and Its Implications,” part C). Searle wrote, “These three dimensions—illocutionary point, direction of fit, and sincerity condition—seem to me the most important, and I will build most of my taxonomy around them, but there are several others that need remarking.” Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 5. Allison justifies his selection of components covered in his work, “Although Searle discusses several other criteria for distinguishing kinds of speech acts, these five (illocutionary point, direction of fit, psychological state, propositional content, relationship of speaker and hearer) are the most important and enable him to construct a five point taxonomy of speech acts.” Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 11.

Essential Condition- Illocutionary Point

The first component of variation is the illocutionary point, which identifies the point or purpose for which the speech act is undertaken.⁷² Searle explained the illocutionary point, “The point or purpose of an order can be specified by saying that it is an attempt to get the hearer to do something. The point or purpose of a description is that it is a representation (true or false, accurate or inaccurate) of how something is. The point or purpose of a promise is that it is an undertaking of an obligation by the speaker to do something.”⁷³ The illocutionary point is the speech act’s internal consequence if the essential condition is satisfied, even if the speaker has other aims or purposes. Searle and Vanderveken explain the internal nature of illocutionary point,

In real life a person may have all sorts of other purposes and aims; e.g. in making a promise, he may want to reassure his hearer, keep the conversation going, or try to appear to be clever, and none of these is part of the essence of promising. But when he makes a promise he necessarily commits himself to do something. Other aims are up to him, none of them is internal to the fact that the utterance is a promise; but if he successfully performs the act of making a promise then he necessarily commits himself to do something, because that is the illocutionary point of the illocutionary act of promising.⁷⁴

A point of clarification between illocutionary point and force is beneficial. Searle provided clarification in *Expression and Meaning*, “Illocutionary point is part of but not the same as illocutionary force. Thus, e.g., the illocutionary point of requests is the same as that of commands: both are attempts to get the hearers to do something. But the illocutionary forces are clearly different. In general, one can say that the notion of illocutionary force is the resultant of several elements of which illocutionary point is only

⁷²Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 2; Searle and Vanderveken, “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” 120; Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 7.

⁷³Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 2. Searle and Vanderveken identify the illocutionary point for other illocutionary acts in “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” “The point of statements and descriptions is to tell people how things are, the point of promises and vows is to commit the speaker to doing something, the point of orders and commands is to try to get people to do things, and so on.” Searle and Vanderveken, “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” 120.

⁷⁴Searle and Vanderveken, “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” 120–21.

one, though, I believe, the most important one.”⁷⁵ So while the illocutionary point may be the same with different speech acts, the force of the speech acts is different because of other variant components such as, but not limited to, mode of achievement, psychological state, and degree of strength.

Preparatory Condition- Mode of Achievement

The second variant, mode of achievement, fulfills a satisfied speech act’s preparatory condition and represents the relationship between the speaker and hearer in terms of status and interest. For a successful command, for example, the speaker must be in a position of authority over the hearer, the hearer must be able to execute the command, the speaker must believe that the hearer is able to carry out the command, etc.⁷⁶ For a promise to succeed, the hearer must prefer that the speaker fulfills the promise than that he does not fulfill it; the speaker must believe that the hearer prefers his (i.e., the speaker’s) fulfilling the promise to his not fulfilling it, and so forth.⁷⁷ If the hearer does not prefer the promise’s content, then the utterance is more of a threat than a promise because of the hearer’s interest.

Another example of how the mode of achievement impacts illocutionary force is the status of the speaker. Analogously a person who makes a statement in his capacity as a witness in a court trial does not merely make a statement, but he *testifies*, and his status as a witness is what makes his utterance count as testimony.⁷⁸ In “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” preparatory conditions are summarized as “such conditions which

⁷⁵Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 3.

⁷⁶Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 10–11.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 11.

⁷⁸Searle and Vanderveken, “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” 122.

are necessary for the successful and non-defective performance of an illocutionary act. In the performance of a speech act the speaker *presupposes* the satisfaction of all the preparatory conditions.⁷⁹ The preparatory condition identifies the state of affairs that have to be obtained.⁸⁰

Sincerity Condition- Psychological State

In general, in the performance of any illocutionary act with propositional content, the speaker expresses some attitude, state, etc., to that propositional content.⁸¹ This criterion corresponds to the *sincerity condition* of a speech act, viz., for a successful assertion to be made, the speaker must express belief in its propositional content; for a successful promise to be made, the speaker must express an intention to do what is promised.⁸² The expressed psychological state is a component of illocutionary force; however, “truth or falsity, on the other hand, of a speech act is a function of the propositional content or locutionary aspect of the utterance.”⁸³ Searle asserts that the sincerity condition has excellent value for taxonomical creation:

If one tries to do a classification of illocutionary acts based entirely on differently expressed psychological states (differences in the sincerity condition) one can get quite a long way. Thus, *belief* collects not only statements, assertions, remarks and explanations, but also postulations, declarations, deductions and arguments. *Intent* will collect promises, vows, threats and pledges. *Desire* or *want* will collect requests, orders, commands, askings, prayers, pleadings, begins and entreaties. *Pleasure* doesn't collect quite so many—congratulations, felicitations, welcomes and a few others.⁸⁴

⁷⁹Searle and Vanderveken, “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” 123.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 123.

⁸¹Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 4.

⁸²Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 9.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 10.

⁸⁴Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 5.

Searle and Vanderveken explained the relationships between sincerity and insincerity and how it impacts the success of a speech act:

It is always possible to express a psychological state that one does not have, and that is how sincerity and insincerity in speech acts are distinguished. An insincere speech act is one in which the speaker performs a speech act and thereby expresses a psychological state even though he does not have that state. Thus an insincere statement (a lie) is one where the speaker does not believe what he says, an insincere apology is one where the speaker does not have the sorrow he expresses, an insincere promise is one where the speaker does not in fact intend to do the things he promises to do. An insincere speech act is defective but not necessarily unsuccessful. A lie, for example, can be a successful assertion. Nevertheless, successful performance of illocutionary acts necessarily involve the expression of the psychological state specified by the sincerity conditions of that type of act.⁸⁵

Propositional Content Condition- Propositional Content

The fourth criterion used to differentiate between illocutionary acts is propositional content and the propositional content condition's fulfillment. The condition requires that specific condition(s) be obtained in locutionary content for a successful and non-defective illocutionary act. For example, the differences between a report and a prediction involve the fact that a prediction must be about the future, whereas a report can be about the past or present.⁸⁶ A command has future action for the hearer in its propositional content, while a promise has a future action for the speaker. Similarly, if a speaker apologizes for something, it must be for something that he has done or is otherwise responsible for.⁸⁷

Direction of Fit

In the performance of an elementary speech act, the speaker always relates in a certain way the propositional content to the world of the utterance to determine a

⁸⁵Searle and Vanderveken, "Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic," 124–25.

⁸⁶Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 6.

⁸⁷Searle and Vanderveken, "Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic," 123.

direction of fit between language and the world.⁸⁸ Searle understood “direction of fit” as “the relationship between the propositional content of a speech act and the world, or reality corresponding to and/or affected by that content.”⁸⁹ For example, a speech act is classified as an assertive when the direction of fit of its propositional content is word-to-(match)-world. The speaker wants his propositional content to match reality or express truthfulness about how things are. However, if the speaker wants to bring reality into alignment with the propositional content, then the speech act is classified as a directive or commissive. The direction of fit is world-to-(alignment with)-word because the satisfaction of utterance is dependent on either the speaker’s or hearer’s future reality aligning with the propositional content of the command or promise.

Degree of Strength

The sixth variant is the degree of strength, which recognizes that there will exist different levels of strength or commitment in the above criteria. Searle and Vanderveken illustrate degree of strength, “For example, if I *request* someone to do something my attempt to get him to do it is less strong than if I *insist* that he do it. If I *suggest* that something is the case the degree of strength of my representation that it is the case is less than if I *solemnly swear* that it is the case. If I *express regret* for having done something my utterance has a lesser degree of strength than if I *humbly apologize* for having done it.”⁹⁰ These examples show that degree of strength occurs throughout the criteria and helps distinguish speech acts that share many of the same components but differ in illocutionary force.

⁸⁸Vanderveken, *Meaning and Speech Acts*, 104.

⁸⁹Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 8.

⁹⁰Searle and Vanderveken, “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” 122.

Summary of Components

Differences in illocutionary point, the direction of fit, expressed psychological states, etc., enable the hearer/reader to distinguish one utterance from another, and thus to grasp the force with which the utterance is made, either as an assertive, a directive, a commissive, an expression, or a declaration.⁹¹ When a speaker meets the criteria necessary for a specific illocutionary force by satisfying the four conditions (propositional, essential, sincerity, preparatory), the illocutionary act is considered successful.

Different illocutionary force components determine different conditions of success or satisfaction and consequently serve different linguistic purposes.⁹² Table two (below) shows how different illocutionary components for different illocutionary acts. For example, a speaker desiring to command his hearer must express a desire (psychological state), the hearer must be able to do what is asked of him (preparatory condition), the propositional content must include a future act (propositional condition), have a direction of fit of world-to-alignment-with-words, and have the purpose of getting the hearer to attempt the commanded action (illocutionary point). Without these conditions being met, the illocutionary act is unsuccessful. Vanderveken explains how the components work with promising and thanking:

For example, a condition of success of a promise is that the speaker commits himself to carrying out a future course of action in the world of the utterance. If the speaker does not commit himself to doing something in a context of utterance, he does not make a promise in that context. Similarly a condition of success of an act of thanking is that the speaker expresses gratitude for something that the hearer has done or is responsible for. If a speaker does not express gratitude in a context of utterance, he does not thank the hearer in that context.⁹³

⁹¹Allison, "Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture," 13–14.

⁹²Vanderveken, *Meaning and Speech Acts*, 104.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 26.

Holy Spirit's Role in Illocutionary Acts

The presence of the Spirit in preaching is necessary for the illocutionary acts of preaching to be successful. As demonstrated in earlier chapters, the Holy Spirit works in the speaker and the hearer during the preaching event through anointing, empowering, emboldening, illuminating, enlightening, convicting, and prompting the hearer to respond. All four conditions of illocutionary acts explain some of the specific works that the Spirit does in preaching. Because the Spirit is involved with accomplishing these four conditions, preaching's illocutions should be considered Spirit-filled.

The propositional content condition requires that certain locutionary content be present in order for an act to be successful; for example, a command needs future propositional content. In all five illocutionary acts, the Spirit accomplishes the propositional content condition by illuminating the preacher's understanding of God's revelation so that the preacher is equipped with the necessary theocentric content to accomplish the illocutionary act. Every illocutionary act of preaching would fail to have the necessary propositional content without God's revelation, which was inspired by the Spirit, providing the content for commanding, asserting, expressing, declaring, and promising.

Second, the Spirit works in the preparatory condition's success by establishing the necessary status, or relationship, between the speaker and the hearer. Different illocutionary acts require specific relationships to be successful; for example, a command requires that the speaker is recognized as having authority over the hearer. Alternatively, in a promise, the hearer and speaker must agree that it benefits the hearer to have the future action accomplished and that the speaker can do such future action. Furthermore, in some illocutionary acts, the preparatory condition requires the speaker to have extra-linguistic institutional authority, such as a boss having authority over an employee, a police officer over a citizen, or the military president.

In preaching, the necessary institutional authority is the God-given authority of the preacher that results from the Spirit's affirmation and confirmation of the preacher's call to steward, testify, serve, and herald the Word of God. The institutional authority of preaching is impactful in every illocutionary act by establishing the necessary relationship between God, His ambassador, and the hearer: God is wise and man is foolish (assertion); God is creator-king and man is created (directive); God is faithful and able while man is fragile and incomplete (commissive); God is infinite and man is finite in understanding (expressive); and God is Lord, Creator, and Master while man is His creation (directive). The Spirit convicts the hearer that the preacher is God's herald, witness, steward, servant, teacher, or bearer of good news, even though the hearer may reject or deny the Spirit's convicting work.

Third, the illocutionary point, or purpose, of the illocutionary act is accomplished through the Spirit's illumination upon the hearer. The essential condition requires that the hearer clearly understand the point or purpose of an illocutionary act. In the second chapter of his first letter to the Corinthian church, the apostle Paul informed the Corinthians that the Spirit's illumination is necessary because the natural man cannot understand spiritual things (1 Cor 2:14). The Spirit's illumination enables the hearer to move beyond understanding the basic meaning of the preached words in their language to understanding the spiritual force of those same preached words. In order for anyone to understand the spiritual illocutionary acts of preaching, the Spirit must accomplish the essential condition by illuminating the hearer's comprehension of the illocutionary point.

The fourth and last example of the Spirit's work in illocutionary conditions is the Spirit's establishment of the sincerity condition's necessary attitude. Different illocutionary acts express different attitudes that the hearer recognizes and uses in identifying what the speaker is doing, such as expressing belief in the truth being asserted or intention when promising or desire when commanding. One of the unique aspects of preaching is that the Spirit strengthens and communicates the speaker's attitudes about

the theocentric propositional content in every illocutionary act. For example, biblical preaching's assertions are strengthened by the Spirit's affirmation of truth upon the preacher and hearer. Alternatively, in commissives, the Spirit assures God's promises that have been offered through God's ambassador.

Like other speech, preaching includes the universal conditions of illocutionary acts; however, the Holy Spirit assists and empowers the fulfillment of such conditions in preaching. One way that God reveals Himself presently through the proclamation of His historical revelation is through the fulfillment of illocutionary conditions. The anointed and empowered speech of preaching results directly from the Spirit's fulfilling of four essential communication conditions: preparatory, essential, propositional, and sincerity. As stated in chapters one and two, preaching is a dual-communication of the Spirit and the preacher, which is linguistically explained as dual fulfillment of illocutionary components.

Searle's Taxonomy and Preaching's Illocutionary Acts

This chapter establishes that an illocutionary act is the function of a speech act that the hearer uses to identify what the speaker is doing with what he is saying. The hearer deciphers what the speaker is doing by naturally identifying the illocutionary components of propositional content, speaker and hearer's status, sincerity, psychological state, and degree of strength. Searle's taxonomy classifies the functions of speech, using the components above, into five categories representing the five possible functions (F) that a speaker can do with his propositional content, F(p). Assertions, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives form the five primary functions of speech.

Searle's primary illocutions can shed light on what God can do as His heralds proclaim (κηρύσσω), His witnesses testify (μαρτυρέω), His teachers exegete and announce (διδάσκω), His evangelists evangelize (εὐαγγελίζω), and His preachers exhort and admonish (παρακαλέω). Each NT term does not correlate with a singular illocution;

instead, the illocutions are possible functions for each NT term. A herald asserts the truth, promises on behalf of his master, commands with his master's authority, and expresses his master's emotions. Through the preacher, the Spirit uses each of these illocutions to accomplish the goal of NT preaching: declaring Jesus Christ through historical revelation and calling the hearer to repentance and faith. These illocutionary acts are the toolbox of communication used by the preacher in fulfilling his call to be a steward, servant, witness, and herald of the Word.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, illocutionary acts are accomplished when specific components of speech occur. Thus, each illocutionary category has a characteristic combination of components that result in that specific illocutionary act being brought about. Table two shows the unique combination of each illocutionary act. The table lists the five primitive illocutionary acts in columns and the illocutionary components in five rows: illocutionary point, the direction of fit, psychological state, propositional content, and preparatory conditions. Below the five rows of components, Allison provides two rows that include example verbs and a sentence for each act. When one compares Searle's example verbs of illocutionary acts, Allison's example verbs, and Adam's NT example verbs, the comparison supports the claim that preaching, like all other speech, includes more doing than transferring information.

Table 2. Allison's components of illocutionary acts⁹⁴

Category	Assertive	Directive	Commissive	Expressive	Declaration
Symbolism	$\uparrow \downarrow B(p)$	$! \uparrow W$ (H does A)	$C \uparrow I$ (S does A)	$E \emptyset (P)$ (S/H+property)	$D \uparrow \emptyset (p)$
Illocutionary Point	To commit speaker S to the truth of the expressed proposition p	An attempt by speaker S to get the hearer H to do some action A	To commit speaker S to some future course of action A	To express psychological state specified in P about a state of affairs specified in the content	To bring about the state of affairs specified in the propositional content p
Direction of Fit	\downarrow = words to match world; prop. content matches reality	\uparrow = world to align with words; reality is to match prop. content	\uparrow = world to align with words; reality is to match prop. content	\emptyset = speaker does not try to get world to match words, or vice versa; truth of prop. content p presupposed	\uparrow = a declaration brings about a fit between content p and reality
Psychological State	B = belief	W = Wish/Want	I = intention	(P) = variable	\emptyset = no sincerity cond.

⁹⁴Allison, "Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture," 11.

Table 2. continued

Category	Assertive	Directive	Commissive	Expressive	Declaration
Prop. Content	P= something propounded for consideration, assessable in terms of truth or falsity	H does A- hearer H does some future act A	S does A= speaker S does some future act A	S/H+property= content ascribes some property (or action) to speaker S or hearer H	P= something propounded
Preparatory Conditions	Speaker S has evidence (reasons, etc.) for the truth of p	H is able to do A; S believes H is able to do A; it is in the best interests to do A	H prefers S does A than that he not do it; S believes A is beneficial for H; S is in a position to do A	An appropriate occasion obtains	Authority of speaker S within some extra-linguistic institution
Example Verbs	State, assert, note, believes, affirm, report	Command, order, beg, urge, dare	Vow, bet, promise, pledge, plan	Thank, praise, commend, congratulate	Declare, I resign, I pronounce
Example Sentence	Jesus Christ has come again.	Jesus Christ, come again! (God speaking)	I, Jesus Christ, will come again.	Oh! Jesus Christ has come again!	Jesus Christ hereby come again. (God speaks, and Jesus returns)

The assertive class commits “the speaker (in varying degrees) to something’s being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition.”⁹⁵ Assertives can be judged on the truthfulness or falsity of the statement. The direction of fit of assertives is propositional content matches reality or to say how things really are. The necessary psychological state is belief or commitment. Searle illustrates how the degree of belief varies in assertives, “Thus, there is a difference between *suggesting* that *p* or *putting it forward as a hypothesis* that *p* on the one hand and *insisting* that *p* or *solemnly swearing* that *p* on the other. The degree of belief and commitment may approach or even reach zero, but it is clear or will become clear, that *hypothesizing that p* and *flatly stating that p* are in the same line of business in a way that neither is like requesting.”⁹⁶ Verbs frequently used to express assertives are to state, affirm, say, present, inform, and tell, which align with Adam’s NT categories of information, declaration, persuasion, and conversation.⁹⁷

Assertives occur in preaching when the preacher utters theocentric propositional content that he believes is true. The hearer understands through uptake that the preacher believes that his propositional content declares God’s truth about reality (words-to-match-world) in areas like morality, truth, anthropology, theology, prophecy, and creation. Since the illocutionary acts of preaching are utilizing theocentric propositions—content that aligns with and honors biblical authority—the assertions of preaching are not only declaring the preacher’s belief of the truth but ultimately, God’s truth as revealed in Scripture. Like all assertives, the sermon’s assertive is scrutinized by the hearers concerning its truthfulness.

⁹⁵Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 12–13.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 13.

⁹⁷Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 76.

An example of an assertive in preaching is when the preacher says, “Jesus Christ rose from the grave three days after his death.” The preacher’s declaration is an assertion because his theocentric proposition, “Jesus Christ rose from the grave three days after his death,” is being declared as truth—his words match the reality of the historical life of Jesus Christ. The hearer interprets that the preacher aims to present historical truthfulness about the life of Jesus in hopes that the hearer would receive it as truth. This assertion’s success is based on the hearer’s understanding, or uptake, of the assertive force and the propositional content and not the acceptance of the truth by the hearer. The preacher is not asking if Jesus rose; the preacher is declaring (κηρύσσω), stating, teaching (διδάσκω), persuading (παρακαλεώ), presenting (εὐαγγελίζω), testifying (μαρτυρέω), and saying with biblical authority that it is historically accurate that Jesus rose from the grave.

Directives are the second class of illocutionary acts, and they have “an illocutionary point of attempting (to varying degrees, and hence, more precisely, they are determinate of the determinable which includes attempting) by the speaker to get the hearer to do something.”⁹⁸ The degree of variation can range from inviting and suggesting to more fierce attempts of insisting. The propositional content will always have the hearer doing some future action. The direction of fit is world-to-alignment-with-words because when directives are satisfied, the world is transformed to fit the propositional content. The necessary psychological state that must be expressed is want, wish, or desire. Simply, biblical preaching’s directives are statements that try and get the hearer to do something based on biblical authority by using a verb similar to asking, ordering, commanding, requesting, begging, pleading, or advising. SAT’s category of directives aligns with Adam’s categories of declaration, exhortation, and persuasion.⁹⁹

⁹⁸Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 13.

⁹⁹Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 76.

Preaching's directives are utterances that express God's desire for how the hearer should act in the future. The preacher is serving as an ambassador by delivering God's commands from Scripture. The directive's authority is not the preacher's authority; it is God's authority as revealed in Scripture and communicated by the preacher through theocentric propositions. The hearer deciphers that the preacher insists or demands that the hearer's future actions align with the theocentric propositional content. A successful directive in a sermon is not dependent on the hearer's future actions matching the theocentric propositional content; instead, success is the hearer understanding that God is communicating how He wants the hearer to act in the future. Common directives in preaching include salvation, sanctification, repentance, and making disciples of all nations.

An example of a directive in preaching is when the preacher contends with the hearer, "Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." The preacher and God desire the hearer to "repent and believe" in the future, preferably, the near future, so that the hearer may be saved. The direction of fit of the commands is world-to-alignment-with-words because the preacher wishes that the hearer's future reality will be him repenting and believing. The hearer deciphers the utterance to be a command based on the preacher's expressed psychological state being desire/wish/contending and the content being a hearer's future action. Whether or not the hearer repents and believes if the hearer understands that God's ambassador is calling him or her to repent and believe, then the illocutionary act is successful.

Searle's third class is commissives similar to directives but differs because the speaker is committing himself to a future action rather than the hearer. The direction of fit of commissives is world-to-alignment-with-words because the speaker wants his future action to align with his propositional content. In terms of the sincerity condition, the speaker must express the psychological attitude of intention. The propositional content will always include the speaker doing some future action. The speaker expresses his

intention to do a future action through verbs such as commit, threaten, pledge, undertake, vow, promise, and swear.

Preaching's commissives are when the preacher, as an ambassador of God, communicates the promises of God's Word to the hearer. Commissives would fall into Adam's categories of persuasion and declaration.¹⁰⁰ The hearer identifies the saying as a commissive because the propositional content is a future action that God guarantees to occur. The success of a commissive in preaching is not fulfilling the promise but rather the hearer's understanding that the speaker is expressing the intention to do something. With biblical preaching, the validity or trustworthiness of a commissive is the reputation of God, who is eternally faithful and cannot lie (Tit. 1:2, Heb. 6:18). The evidence of fulfilled prophecy strengthens God's reliability in fulfilling the promises He makes throughout the Old and New Testaments.

The difference between a promise and a threat is whether God's future actions will bring about good or bad in the hearer's life. To illustrate the difference, while also providing an example of a commissive, consider when the preacher promises, "God will judge the world in truth and righteousness." The utterance is understood as a commissive because the propositional content is a future action expressed with God's genuine intention of judging the world. The preparatory condition is met because God, as Creator-King, is a justifiable judge of all creation.

However, the commissive of God's future judgment will be to some a promise and to others a threat. The deciding factor depends on whether the hearer believes that God judging the world is a good or bad thing for them. For the believer and child of God, the commissive is a promise because God's judgment is beneficial for the vindication of the kingdom of God. For the unbeliever, the judgment is a threat that one day God will hold them accountable for their actions that denied and rejected His authority over

¹⁰⁰Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 76.

creation. Both the believer and unbeliever understand the utterance to be a commissive because of future action and expressed intention to act; however, based on the hearer's perception of the future judgment, the commissive is either a promise or a threat.

The fourth class of illocutionary acts in Searle's taxonomy is expressives. The illocutionary point of an expressive is to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content. Examples of expressives include thanksgiving, congratulations, apologizing, condoling, or welcoming. There is no direction of fit for expressives because the speaker is not trying to align his words to the world or the world to his words; instead, he is merely expressing his or someone's feelings about reality. One necessity for expressives is that some psychological state has to be articulated in the locutionary content.

The word hallelujah is an example of an expressive in biblical preaching. The word is an expression of rejoicing in response to the propositional content that precedes the hallelujah. The preacher may assert that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world and then express his gratitude and thankfulness for such assertion by uttering hallelujah. The word hallelujah means to praise Yahweh and is used to express one's praise and adoration for God's glory and goodness. The biblical preacher is merely expressing his attitude about the proposition that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world. The usage of hallelujah in preaching displays the preacher's affection and joy for the biblical truth in hopes that it stirs the listener's heart.

The last class of illocutionary acts is declaratives. Searle wrote, "There is still left an important class of cases, where the state of affairs represented in the proposition expressed is realized or brought into existence by the illocutionary force indicating device, cases where one brings a state of affairs into existence by declaring it to exist, cases where, so to speak, 'saying makes it so.'"¹⁰¹ Declaratives bring the propositional

¹⁰¹Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 16.

content into reality, such as firing an employee, appointing a chairman, or marrying a man and a woman.

The direction of fit is double, meaning “when the illocutionary act is satisfied, the world is transformed by the present action of the speaker to fit the propositional content by the fact that the speaker represents it as being so transformed. Their point is to get the world to match the propositional content by saying that the propositional content matches the world.”¹⁰² One necessity is that the one declaring must have institutional authority to declare the propositional content true, i.e., a minister has the authority to marry, an employee has the authority to quit, a military general can declare war, and God has the authority to speak into existence.

In terms of biblical preaching, this dissertation cannot identify declaratives in the preaching event. At first, two types of illocutionary acts appeared to be declaratives until further evaluation ruled both of them out. One type of utterances that could be easily confused as declaratives are assertives that bring to light the truth that the hearer did not previously know but was reality. For example, one may become aware that they are a sinner during the sermon based on the preacher’s assertions. The new understanding of being a sinner may appear to be a change in reality for the hearer, but actually, the understanding is an illumination of the truth being assertive and not a declared change of reality (declarative).

Another example of this type of misconception is when the preacher declares that those who do not trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior go to hell. Once again, the reality of the unbeliever’s eternal destination did not change because of the sermon; instead, the hearer’s knowledge of that reality changed during the sermon. A change in one’s knowledge of reality is a result of accepting the truth that is being asserted rather

¹⁰²Vanderveken, *Meaning and Speech Acts*, 106.

than a reality brought into existence by the preacher's words. Illumination or recognition of new truth does not qualify for what SAT means by a change of reality.

The second type of utterances that could easily be confused as declaratives are commissives that promise a change in reality if accepted by the hearer. The call of salvation is an example of a commissive that could lead to a change of reality due to a declarative utterance of faith by the hearer. The preacher says, "If one confesses with their mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believes in their heart that God raised him from the dead, they will be saved." The preacher continues, "One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

The preacher's utterances are not declaratives because the offer or promise of salvation does not save one.¹⁰³ The preacher has proclaimed a commissive that if one believes in Jesus, they will be saved. The declarative would be when the hearers respond to the promise of salvation and declare their belief in Jesus Christ. If the hearer declares his or her belief in Jesus, then reality does change in the sense that the professor of faith goes from sinner to saint, from child of darkness to child of light, from enemy of God to child of God, from spiritually dead to eternal life in Christ and from destined to hell to promised eternity with God in heaven. Once again, the change of reality did not occur at the promise of salvation but rather the hearer's declaration of faith in Jesus Christ.

After ruling out assertions that bring to light a new understanding of pre-existing reality and commissives that promise a change in reality upon the hearer's future actions, this dissertation did not find clear examples of declaratives in preaching. For a declarative to exist in preaching, one would have to show and support how certain words uttered by the preacher change reality without any future actions. One would have to

¹⁰³See pages 97-98n27 of chapter five.

demonstrate that a sermon contains utterances equivalent to God speaking light into existence or a minister declaring a man and a woman to be married, or an umpire calling a runner out at second base. The absence of declaratives does not mean that preaching does not play a role in changing reality; instead, it means preaching does not have the authority to speak change into reality without future actions.

Searle's taxonomy establishes that natural language is a capable vehicle for the Spirit and preacher to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and call the hearer to repent and believe. Assertions declare the truth about reality and call the listener to align themselves with God's truth. The Spirit can command the hearer to behave godly or fulfill a godly commission through directives. The promises of the kingdom of Christ are communicated through Spirit-filled commissions. Furthermore, the preacher models godly attitudes and emotions through expressives during the sermon. Like the variety of NT preaching terms demonstrate that preaching is more than transferring information, Searle's taxonomy demonstrates speech's multiple functions or actions. The preacher's call is to utilize oral communication (assertions, directives, commissives, and expressives) to steward, witness to, herald, and serve the Word of God in the Spirit of God.

Conclusion

SAT provides a linguistic explanation of the preaching event that supports the biblically rich images and titles given to preaching and the preacher. For example, SAT explains the oral communication that is behind Adam's list of biblical images for preaching: sowing the seed, treading out the grain, the harvest, planting the seed, watering the seed, providing milk, providing solid food, laying a foundation, being a father, work, giving birth, the fight, demolishing, making captive, tearing down, and

building up.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the theory clarifies how Stott's preacher portraits operate linguistically, in terms of how God uses the preacher to herald, witness, serve, and steward the Word of God through Spirit-filled illocutions.¹⁰⁵

SAT explains the "doing" of preaching as God using the preacher to assert God's truths, command God's directives, promise God's faithfulness, and express godly attitudes about reality. The hearer recognizes the Spirit's and preacher's communicative actions because of the variations in verbal communication such as illocutionary point, mode of achievement, psychological state, propositional content, direction of fit, and degree of strength. Speech variations help the hearer move from the general meaning of the locutionary act to the illocutionary act's specific meaning. When the hearer can understand and decipher the saying's content and force, the preacher's illocutionary act is successful. Through the sermon's illocutionary acts, God declares His historical revelation of Jesus Christ and calls the hearer to align themselves with His kingdom through repentance and faith.

A successful assertion in preaching is when the hearer comprehends that the biblical preacher is confidently stating God's truth about reality. When the hearer understands that the preacher desires and is calling him or her to align their life with God's Word, a successful directive occurs. The preacher successfully declares God's promises by vocalizing God's commitment and longing to act in a future way. Lastly, successful expressives in preaching are emotive proclamations about reality. All successful illocutionary acts in preaching depend on the hearer's ability to identify the preacher's intention and force of their verbal expression of theocentric propositional content.

¹⁰⁴Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 76.

¹⁰⁵For Scott's preacher portraits, see Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait*.

The “doing” of preaching is dependent on the work of the Spirit to illuminate, authenticate, confirm, and convict the hearer and preacher. Because biblical preaching is dealing with spiritual truth, the understanding necessary in speech is dependent on the Spirit’s faithful work of illuminating the incapable human mind. The Spirit authenticates the preacher’s power and position as an ambassador of God so that preaching’s commands have the required authority. The Spirit confirms the faithfulness of God in the hearts of man so that one can know that God is capable of doing what He promises to do in His Word. The truth of God’s Word is affirmed in the hearer’s hearts and minds through spiritual illumination. The Holy Spirit has an indispensable role in the success of the sermon’s communicative actions.

When a preacher accomplishes successful illocutionary acts with his theocentric propositions, the preacher has been faithful to his call to herald, testify, steward, and serve the Word of God through biblical preaching. The preacher’s faithfulness is not dependent on the hearer’s response or reaction; instead, it is based upon successfully communicating the assertions, directives, expressives, and commissives of God’s Word. SAT’s separation of perlocutionary effect (hearer response) and illocutionary success (hearer understanding) is beneficial for defining and distinguishing between faithfulness (illocutionary success) and fruitfulness (perlocutionary effects) in biblical preaching.

SAT’s explanation of illocutionary acts offers a linguistic defense that language can accomplish what God desires to do through biblical preaching: proclaim Christ and call for repentance and faith. Language is a capable vehicle for God to use to accomplish His desires to use a preacher, his ambassador, teach His truth, offer His promises, proclaim His commands, and express His attitudes. SAT’s illocutionary acts explain how biblical preaching’s theological expectations (calling the sinner to salvation and the saint to sanctification) are accomplished through illocutionary acts of assertions, directives, commissives, and expressives. The taxonomy of illocutionary acts based on

illocutionary acts' variant components provides a thorough and comprehensive explanation of the preacher's communicative actions.

CHAPTER 6

PERLOCUTIONARY ACTS IN PREACHING

Biblical preaching is a means by which God brings about spiritual transformation, specifically through the Spirit's application of biblical truth.¹ Dever wrote, "The Holy Spirit uses the preached word to give spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead, and He uses the preached word to conform God's people more closely to the image of Jesus."² Preaching is not only the explanation of the theological thrust of God's word but also its application to real people living real lives with a real need for that message.³ York identifies application as the ultimate goal of the sermon:

If you get nothing else from this book, understand this: sermons are not about just imparting information. They should be custom-built to change lives. We don't want to fill their heads; we want the proclamation of the Word to grip their souls and motivate them to conform to the will of God. Our approach to the Bible and to preaching, therefore, has *application* as its ultimate goal. Application is what makes the Bible come alive and makes sermons practical.⁴

The Spirit's work with the sermon's application of God's Word aims to convict and change the entire person. Keller, influenced by Jonathan Edwards, speaks of application as preaching to the heart, the biblical seat of the mind, will, and emotions, all

¹Albert Mohler Jr., *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 69.

²Mark Dever, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice*, IX Marks (Nashville: B & H Books, 2012), 60.

³Abraham Kuruvilla, *A Vision for Preaching: Understanding the Heart of Pastoral Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 114.

⁴Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 11. See also Kuruvilla, *A Vision for Preaching*, 113–15; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 18; Steven J. Lawson, "The Passion of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of 1 Timothy 4:13-16," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159, no. 633 (January 1, 2002): 86.

together.⁵ Greidanus calls for preaching to be applied to the whole person, holistically addressing the intellect, the will, and the emotions.⁶ Lawson writes, “Preaching must grip the heart and challenge the will. The entire person—mind, emotion, and will—must be impacted.”⁷

Sermonic application is when preachers execute their ultimate goal of calling the hearer to godly transformation. York says, “Like the prophets and the apostles, we preach for a *decision*, not merely for information.”⁸ Application bids the hearer to respond because the Word of God “beckons and awaits an answer.”⁹ Mohler quotes and agrees with John MacArthur’s goal of compelling people to make a decision:

Furthermore, true exposition demands a hearing from God’s people and presents all hearers with a decision. As John MacArthur explains, “I believe the goal of preaching is to compel people to make a decision. I want people who listen to me to understand exactly what God’s Word demands of them when I am through. Then they must say either, ‘Yes, I will do what God says,’ or ‘No, I won’t do what God says.’” Every sermon presents the hearer with a forced decision. We will either obey or disobey the Word of God. The sovereign authority of God operates through the preaching of His Word to demand obedience from His people.¹⁰

Is there an explanation of how God uses oral communication to achieve these applicational aims in preaching? Yes, the application is the perlocutionary intention of preaching’s oral communication. SAT’s theory of perlocutionary acts expresses and explains that all verbal language has perlocutionary intentions along with perlocutionary effects. Perlocutionary effects are the “certain consequential effects upon the feelings,

⁵Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), chap. 6.

⁶Sidney Greidanus, *Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 339.

⁷Steven J. Lawson, “The Priority of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of Acts 2:42-47,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158, no. 630 (April 1, 2001): 86.

⁸York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 17.

⁹Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!: A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 117, 136.

¹⁰Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 69.

thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them.”¹¹

Both the locutionary act and illocutionary act may have perlocutionary intentions of impacting the feelings, thoughts, and actions of anyone involved in the communicative act. When verbal communication causes such changes (perlocutionary act), the change is considered a perlocutionary effect. Austin used the preposition “by” to distinguish it from the locutionary and illocutionary act: “We may also perform *perlocutionary acts*: what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even, say, surprising or misleading.”¹²

Allison’s five sentences that share the same referent of “Jesus Christ” and the same predicate of “come again” help illustrate perlocutionary acts:

1. Jesus Christ has come again.
2. Jesus Christ, come again! (God speaking)
3. I, Jesus Christ, will come again.
4. Oh! Jesus Christ has come again!
5. Jesus Christ hereby comes again. (God speaking; at this utterance, Jesus Christ returns.)¹³

Despite the shared propositional content, the different illocutionary forces have different perlocutionary intentions: (1) the assertive intends for the hearer to adopt the truth, (2) the directive intends for Jesus, the hearer, to do as he is commanded, (3) the commissive intends the speaker, Jesus Christ, to come as he has promised, (4) the expressive intends to stir the emotions of the hearer, and (5) the declarative intends to make Jesus’ return a reality. In these examples, the illocutions are changing feelings (4), thoughts (1), and actions (2, 3, and 5).

¹¹John L. Austin and James O. Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, 2nd ed. (1962; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 101.

¹²*Ibid.*, 109.

¹³Gregg Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” *Theological Research Exchange Network*, no. ETS-4542 (November 19, 1993): 11.

Like all oral communication, biblical preaching has perlocutionary intentions that aim at changing the feelings, thoughts, and actions of anyone involved in the preaching event. This chapter demonstrates that verbal speech is a capable vehicle for God to utilize to bring about His desire to save the lost, sanctify the believer, and condemn the unbelieving through biblical preaching. This chapter demonstrates that preaching impacts more than the mind, strengthening one of chapter five's conclusions that preaching is more than sharing information. The chapter includes an introduction to perlocutionary acts, an explanation of the Spirit's role in perlocutions, a NT survey of the responses to NT preaching, and a demonstration of oral communication's viability to be utilized in sermonic application.

Perlocutionary Act

Along with locutionary and illocutionary acts, the speech act contains a connected and distinct third act: the perlocutionary act. Austin demonstrated the distinctions between the three acts by using the prepositions of (locution), in (illocution), and by (perlocution).¹⁴ For example, consider a mom saying to her family that the food is ready. In the act *of* saying the proposition, the mom accomplishes the locutionary act of uttering propositional content. *In* saying that the food is ready, the mom asserted (illocution) the truth that she was done cooking and the food was prepared. *By* saying that the food was ready, her kids turned off the TV, washed their hands, and headed to the table for dinner (perlocutions). While the speech act did not include the phrase "come and eat," her illocutionary act of asserting the dinner's readiness resulted in the perlocutionary effects of her kids turning off the TV and heading to the dinner table.

¹⁴Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 109.

Simply stated, perlocutionary acts are the consequential effects that [can] follow the locutionary and illocutionary acts.¹⁵ By uttering the sentence *You don't look a day over forty*, one might flatter an elderly person to whom it was addressed, amuse or insult a young addressee, embarrass oneself, and so on.¹⁶ Austin introduced perlocutionary acts in his Harvard Lectures as “certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them.”¹⁷ He continued addressing the intentionality and possibilities of perlocutions, “For clearly any, or almost any, perlocutionary act is liable to be brought off, in sufficiently special circumstances, by the issuing, with or without calculation, of any utterance whatsoever, and in particular by a straightforward constative utterance (if there is such an animal).”¹⁸

For Austin, perlocutionary acts are any consequential effects resulting from the communicative act's special circumstances, either by design or not, upon the feelings, thoughts, and actions of anyone involved. For example, by arguing I may *persuade* or *convince* someone, by warning him I may *scare* or *alarm* him, by making a request I may *get him to do something*, by informing him I may *convince* him (*enlighten, edify, inspire, him, get him to realize*).¹⁹

Since perlocutions are the consequential effects or by-products of the first two acts (locution and illocution), exploring the relationship between the three acts helps define perlocutions. Perlocutions can be caused by either the locution or the illocution:

¹⁵Jerrold M. Sadock, *Toward a Linguistic Theory of Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), 8-9.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 8-9.

¹⁷Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 101.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁹John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 1969), 25, *italics by Searle to identify perlocutionary acts*.

“Every major step in the schema can give rise to some distinct perlocutionary effect and so be instrumental to the performance of some perlocutionary act.”²⁰ Bach demonstrates how locutionary acts can produce perlocutionary effects, “The utterance of certain words might be intended to offend someone just by their sound or their manner of pronunciation; or perhaps their meaning is what offends. And the locutionary act might have a distinctive perlocutionary effect, such as reminding the hearer of a person or event referred to.”²¹

Searle gives examples of illocutionary understanding producing perlocutionary effects, “For example, by making a statement (illocutionary) a speaker may convince or persuade (perlocutionary) his audience, by making a promise (illocutionary) he may reassure or create expectations (perlocutionary) in his audience.”²² Three questions typically arise when studying perlocutionary acts: Is every perlocutionary effect a result of illocutionary intention? Is there a limit to the number of perlocutionary effects possible with an utterance? How do the perlocutionary effects impact illocutionary achievement?

Conventional vs. Circumstantial

The first question is whether every perlocutionary effect results from illocutionary intentionality or are there effects that occur outside the agent’s intention? SAT divides perlocutions into two main categories: intrinsic effects of illocutionary convention and extrinsic effects from special circumstances of utterance. Austin wondered from the beginning of his discussion on perlocutions if a separation between intrinsic and extrinsic effects was needed, “Perhaps restrictions need making, as there is

²⁰Kent Bach and Robert Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1982), 82.

²¹*Ibid.*, 17.

²²John R. Searle and Daniel Vanderveken, “Speech Acts and Illocutionary Logic,” in *Logic, Thought and Action*, ed. Daniel Vanderveken, Logic, Epistemology, and the Unity of Science (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2005), 118-119.

clearly a difference between what we feel to be the real production of real effects and what we regard as mere conventional consequences.”²³ Austin wanted to identify and classify the difference between the consequences of one doing a command (a conventional consequence of the illocution) from the feeling of frustration that resulted circumstantially from having to do the command (circumstantial effect).

Distinguishing between a perlocutionary object (intrinsic) and the perlocutionary sequel (extrinsic) is how Austin described the difference between conventional and circumstantial:

The perlocutionary act may be either the achievement of a perlocutionary object (convince, persuade) or the production of a perlocutionary sequel. Thus the act of warning may achieve its perlocutionary object of alerting and also have the perlocutionary sequel of alarming, and an argument against a view may fail to achieve its object but have the perlocutionary sequel of convincing our opponent of its truth ('I only succeeded in convincing him'). What is the perlocutionary object of one illocution may be the sequel of another. For example, warning may produce the sequel of deterring and saying 'Don't', whose object is to deter, may produce the sequel of alerting or even alarming. Some perlocutionary acts are always the producing of a sequel, namely those where there is no illocutionary formula: thus I may surprise you or upset you or humiliate you by a locution, though there is no illocutionary formula 'I surprise you by...', 'I upset you by ...', 'I humiliate you by ...'²⁴

Austin's terminology of "object" and "sequel" is very similar to the legal uses of "result" (intrinsic) and "consequence" (extrinsic):

Intriguingly, Duff's distinction between the "result" of an action and its "consequence" corresponds precisely to the distinction between illocutions and perlocutions. As Duff rightly observes, "I 'intend' what I have decided to bring about; but I cannot intend a result which is 'wholly beyond' my control. A "result" is what occurs when the action is done (e.g., what one does in saying something). The result, one might say, is an aspect of the action: the food going down my throat is a result of my swallowing. If the food doesn't go down, I have not swallowed. "To discern an agent's intentions is to grasp the relation between her action and its context....what she will count as success or failure in what she does." The "consequence" of an action, on the other hand, is an event that follows from or is caused by the action. As a consequence of my swallowing, I may appease my hunger. Then again I may not (I may want seconds). Consequences are not tied to

²³Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 103.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 118.

actions as closely as are results. Consequences are not intrinsic, but extrinsic, to actions. Consequences have to do with ulterior, perlocutionary purposes. As such, they fall outside the purview of intended action. Perlocutionary intentions, I suggest, are aimed at producing consequences.²⁵

One perlocutionary effect is a result, or perlocutionary object, which occurs as a product of illocutionary convention. These are considered intrinsic because of the close relationship perlocutionary results have with the illocutionary action. Example results of an illocutionary act would be the actions promised in a commissive, the demands declared in a directive, and the cognitive acceptance of an assertive's truthfulness. All other perlocutionary effects are consequences or perlocutionary sequels because they are circumstantial by-products.²⁶

A husband's commissive to mow the yard can illustrate the difference between a result and a consequence. The husband promises his wife that he will mow the yard, then he follows through and mows the yard. His commissive result is the mowed yard because it was expected based on the illocutionary act of promising to mow. Possible consequences of his commissive to mow the yard would include: hurting his back, running over and destroying his children's toy, damaging the flower bed, or greeting his neighbor who is mowing his yard. Consequences are circumstantially motivated, while results are conventionally expected.

The speaker's intention can be involved with both results and consequences. The perlocutionary intention is no different whether the aim is the actions of a command (result) or the shock of an assertion (consequence). Consider a dad declaring out loud to his kids that the milk is on the counter. The illocutionary act is an assertion that is declaring the truth that the milk is located on the counter. When the kids hear their dad's

²⁵Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 251. Vanhoozer's quotes of Duff come from R. A. Duff, *Intention, Agency, and Criminal Liability: Philosophy of Action and the Criminal Law* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

²⁶Consequential effects also include effects that are out of the control of the one doing the action. Not all perlocutionary effects are under the speaker's control. See Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text*, 221.

declaration, they feel guilty. So what are the results and consequences of the dad's declaration? The perlocutionary result is that the kids also believe the truth that the milk is on the counter. However, due to the assertion's circumstances, there is a perlocutionary consequence of guiltiness because the dad had told them to put it in the refrigerator. The father intended both perlocutionary effects: the result of accepting his assertive truthfulness and the consequence of guilt.

Perlocutionary Possibilities

Second, is there a limit to the possible perlocutionary consequences that may occur with an utterance? Since consequences are circumstantial and not conventional, the possible outcomes are not limited by illocutionary conventions. Austin seemed hesitant to claim that any perlocutionary effect could occur, "For clearly any, or almost any, perlocutionary act is liable to be brought off, in sufficiently special circumstances, by the issuing, with or without calculation, of any utterance whatsoever."²⁷ Bach adds, "There is virtually no limit to the sorts of things that can result from speech acts—almost anything is possible, from insulting someone to starting a war."²⁸ Levinson connects the indeterminateness of consequences to their circumstantial origins, "In contrast (to illocutionary acts), a perlocutionary act is specific to the circumstances of issuance, and is therefore not conventionally achieved just by uttering that particular utterance, and includes all those effects, intended or unintended, often indeterminate, that some particular utterance in a particular situation may cause."²⁹

The seemingly unlimited nature of perlocutionary consequences is because perlocutionary effects are circumstantial rather than conventional, and they may occur

²⁷Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 111.

²⁸Bach and Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts*, 17.

²⁹Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 237.

outside of the speaker's perlocutionary intentions. On the other hand, perlocutionary results are limited because they are the expected by-products of an achieved illocutionary act. The limited result of an assertion is the hearer's adoption of the proposition's truth (result), and any effect outside of truth being adopted is a consequence of the assertive. Remember, the result of adopting truth or the consequences can be intended by the speaker. Consider the illustration of the dad and his kids; the father's perlocutionary intentions included both the result of accepting the milk's location and the consequence of feeling guilty.

Perlocutions and Illocutionary Achievement

The third and final question is what perlocutionary effects determine illocutionary achievement? Illocutionary achievement is when the perlocutionary results occur following illocutionary understanding.³⁰ Do not confuse illocutionary achievement with illocutionary success, which is when the hearer understands what the speaker is doing with what he is saying without any necessity of perlocutionary effects.³¹ However, the illocutionary achievement is when illocutionary success (understanding) leads to a perlocutionary result. The determination of achievement with assertions is whether the truth understood is then adopted. Similarly, directives have achievement when the hearer's understanding leads to them fulfilling the speaker's request.

The actuality of perlocutionary results, not consequences, is the determination between illocutionary achievement and disappointment. In the illustration of a dad telling his kids that the milk is on the counter, the dad achieves illocutionary achievement when the kids believe that the milk is on the counter. Whether the kids feel guilty or put the milk in the refrigerator does not determine illocutionary achievement. Illocutionary

³⁰See Austin and Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words*, 106, 118.

³¹See pages 105-107 for a discussion of illocutionary success.

success can be followed by illocutionary disappointment: The dad is understood (illocutionary success), and at the same time, the kids do not accept it as truth (illocutionary disappointment). However, illocutionary success and illocutionary achievement do not guarantee perlocutionary consequences: The dad is understood (illocutionary success), and at the same time, the kids do accept it as truth (illocutionary achievement); however, the kids feel no guilt and do not put the milk in the refrigerator (no perlocutionary consequences).

In summary, perlocutionary acts are the by-products of the locutionary act and the illocutionary act that impact anyone's feelings, thoughts, or actions involved in the communicative act. Perlocutionary effects are classified into two categories: results and consequences. The former are the expected effects of illocutionary convention (intended), while the latter occurs circumstantially (intended or unintended), resulting in indeterminable possibilities. Illocutionary success depends on understanding, while illocutionary achievement is determined by the perlocutionary result occurring.

The Spirit and Perlocutionary Effects

The Holy Spirit is the agent who accomplishes biblical preaching's perlocutionary effects of a changed heart, mind, and will of the listener. He illuminates the hearer's understanding of the illocutionary act (affirmation, confirmation, authentication, comprehension), and then He applies the significance of such understanding (conviction and application). The Spirit's agency consists, then, in bringing the illocutionary point home to the reader and in achieving the corresponding perlocutionary effect—belief, obedience, praise, and so on.³² Vines and Shaddix credit the Spirit for making preaching applicable:

³²Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text*, 428.

The Spirit can arouse in the hearers deep desires to know the truth. He has been given by our Lord to bring men to an awareness of their sinfulness, the adequacy of the work of Christ, and the desirability of salvation through Him. The power of the Spirit makes preaching effective and applicable. Paul stated in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.”³³

Biblical preaching’s perlocutionary effects, both results and consequences, are the Holy Spirit’s by-products. They are the effects of the Spirit’s utilization of theocentric locutions and Spirit-filled illocutions to save the lost, sanctify the saved, and condemn the unbeliever. The Spirit’s mission in terms of perlocutionary acts is to make the illuminated truth significant or applicable to the specific situation of the speaker and hearer. Spirit-accomplished application means that “the Holy Spirit is the one who ultimately applies the Word to the deepest parts of a listener’s soul, a place we certainly cannot reach with our finite limitations as preachers.”³⁴ The Spirit’s perlocutionary work does not provide a new meaning to the illocutionary act but “charges” the meaning with significance.³⁵ In brief, the Spirit renders the preached Word *effective*.³⁶

Preaching experiences illocutionary achievement when the Spirit applies the significance of the theocentric illocutionary acts, bringing about the desired perlocutionary result. Biblical preachers assert God’s truth with the desire that the hearer will understand (illocutionary success) and then adopt such truth for themselves through the Spirit (illocutionary achievement). When the hearer faithfully fulfills a declared

³³Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 189. Like Vines and Shaddix, Heisler places his confidence in the Spirit and not the preacher to bring about perlocutionary effects, “We preach with a deep trust in the fact that only the Holy Spirit changes minds and opens hearts. This is why partnering with the Holy Spirit for preaching is liberating, because preachers don’t have to resort to arm-twisting, guilt-tripping, and manipulating shenanigans.” Greg Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit’s Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2007), 116.

³⁴Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 122.

³⁵Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text*, 421.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 427. Heisler writes, “The Spirit of God takes the preached Word of God and pierces the human heart with conviction so that an unmistakable hearing from God takes place in the life of the listener.” Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 22. Runia concludes, “The Spirit works in and through and with the preached word.” K. Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 29 (January 1, 1978): 46.

command of the sermon through the Spirit, God's ambassador can claim illocutionary achievement for his Spirit-filled directive. Vanhoozer praises God for this marvelous work of the Spirit with the Word: "Thanks to the Spirit, God's Word does not return to Him empty but accomplishes the purposes for which it was sent (Isa. 55:11)."³⁷

When discussing the possible effects that the Spirit can and does accomplish, the number of possibilities is indeterminate, but the essence is determinable. As stated in the introduction of this chapter, the sermon application under the Spirit's administration has the essence of transformation. God utilizes biblical preaching to accomplish any change He desires in the hearer's feelings, thoughts, and actions. Because biblical preaching is dependent on theocentric propositions and Spirit-filled illocutions, the proclaimed word carries the same capacities as the written word. The Spirit can apply the preached word to the capacity of judging the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb 4:12). The Spirit-achieved perlocutionary effects include teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training for righteousness (2 Tim 3:16-17).

The Spirit desires for every hearer to be found in Christ and to become like Christ through the preaching of God's Word. In a broad sense, perlocutionary effects achieved by the Spirit target establishing or developing one's union with Christ. As stated in chapter two, union with Christ covers every aspect of our redemption: election (Eph 1:4), effectual calling (1 Pet 5:10), faith (1 Cor 1:2), justification (Rom 8:1), adoption (Gal 3:26), sanctification (John 15:5), perseverance (John 15:6a), and glorification (2 Cor 5:17a).³⁸ The Spirit's work does not end with Spirit-filled utterances but continues with

³⁷Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text*, 428.

³⁸J. V. Fesko, "Sanctification and Union with Christ: A Reformed Perspective," *Evangelical Quarterly*, July 1, 2010, 198.

Spirit-accomplished significance of the preacher's theocentric locutions upon the heart, mind, and will of the hearer.³⁹

The transformation produced by the Spirit's application of illocutionary understanding makes biblical preaching effective. Overdorf agrees, "Effective preaching, stated simply, has an effect. It makes a difference. It changes hearts. It influences decisions. It equips servants. It spurs obedience. Effective preaching unleashes the Word, not only to inform, but also to transform."⁴⁰ Biblical preaching is not merely for understanding an utterance (illocutionary success); it is for perlocutionary transformation (perlocutionary achievement). Vanhoozer includes the Spirit's perlocutionary work in his understanding of 1 Corinthians 2:14,

The distinction between illocution and perlocution casts a different light on Paul's teaching: "A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:14 NASB). If this verse concerns perlocutionary effect, then the sense is that the unspiritual person does not "accept" the implications of what the Bible says; the "natural man" fails to believe its truth or to see its significance. The Spirit thus opens readers' minds and hearts so that the words can produce all their intended effects: effects of illocutionary understanding and effects of perlocutionary obedience. Again, the Spirit's role is not to add a new sense to the Word, but to energize and empower the sense—the speech act—that is already there.⁴¹

Without the Spirit's presence and activity, the sermon's linguistic perlocutionary effects would be incapable of establishing and developing the hearer's union with Christ. Vines and Shaddix plainly state the necessity of the Spirit, "The power of the Holy Spirit makes preaching effective and applicable."⁴² This section emphasizes that the perlocutionary aspect of language is a vehicle or linguistic explanation, and the

³⁹Heisler makes a similar claim without using SAT terminology: "Spirit-empowered preaching is the result of proclaiming the Spirit-taught word that gives a Christ-centered witness and calls for a Spirit-filled response." Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 37.

⁴⁰Daniel Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon: How to Balance Biblical Integrity and Cultural Relevance* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 20.

⁴¹Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text*, 428.

⁴²Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 189.

Spirit is the power of application in preaching. Without the Spirit's presence and power, the perlocutions of any utterance are incapable of spiritual transformation. As declared in the eighty-ninth question of the shorter catechism of the Westminster Confession of Faith: "How is the Word made effectual to salvation? A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation."⁴³

Hearing and Believing

One perspective of sermonic application is the Spirit's ministry, and another is the NT's description of the responses to NT preaching. To complete the full circle of the preaching event—preacher, spirit, audience—it is necessary to provide a survey of NT responses to preaching. This section establishes the NT's description of the audience's response to the preaching event—hearing (illocutionary success), which leads to the perlocutionary effects of believing (illocutionary achievement) or rejecting (illocutionary disappointment). Using 1 Corinthians 1:18, Runia says,

This last passage (I Cor. 1:18), however, shows yet another aspect that must be taken into account. The 'power of God' which is at work in the preached Gospel does not work *automatically*. Paul makes a very clear distinction: "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18). The same distinction is found in many other passages. We mention one more: "For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life" (II Cor. 2:15, 16). When Paul says 'we' are such an aroma, he does not mean his own person as such or even his purity or devotion to life. No, it is *Paul the preacher* who is such an aroma. And again there is the twofold effect. To one Paul the preacher is a deadly fragrance, producing death. To the other he is a salutary fragrance, producing life. Why? Because the Gospel meets with a twofold response. By some it is *rejected in unbelief*.⁴⁴

⁴³Administrative Committee PCA, "The Westminster Confession: The Shorter Catechism," accessed November 27, 2020, www.pcaac.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ShorterCatechismwithScriptureProofs.pdf.

⁴⁴Runia, "What Is Preaching According to the New Testament," 29.

The book of Acts records a twofold response to the preached Word starting from the beginning in Jerusalem through Paul's missionary preaching. Following Peter's second sermon in Acts 3, Luke records the following two responses: "many of those who heard the message believed" and a confrontation with Sadducees because "they were annoyed that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 4:2-4). In Pisidian Antioch, after the "whole town assembled to hear the word of the Lord," there are once again two reactions: Gentiles who heard, rejoiced, honored the word of the Lord, and believed along with Jews who incited the crowd and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:48-51). Immediately following Acts 13, Luke records the twofold response in Iconium:

In Iconium they entered the Jewish synagogue, as usual, and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So they stayed there a long time and spoke boldly for the Lord, who testified to the message of his grace by enabling them to do signs and wonders. But the people of the city were divided, some siding with the Jews and others with the apostles. When an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat and stone them, they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian towns of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding countryside. There they continued preaching the gospel. (Acts 14:1-7)

Chapter seventeen of Acts records three different occasions of reception and rejection, occurring in three different cities: In Thessalonica, some are persuaded and join Paul while the Jews became jealous and caused a rejecting riot; in Berea, many believed while the Jews agitated and upset the crowd towards rejection; and in Athens, some joined and believed while others ridiculed him. Paul's ministry in Corinth results in many believing and being baptized after hearing his preaching, but it also results in a Jewish attack because he was "persuading people to worship God in ways contrary to the law" (Acts 18:8-13). Moreover, Luke records Paul's ministry being accepted and rejected in Ephesus: "Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly over a period of three months, arguing and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became hardened and would not believe, slandering the Way in front of the crowd, he withdrew

from them, taking the disciples, and conducted discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:8-9).

The book of Acts demonstrates that the call to believe following the preaching of the gospel resulted in some receiving and some rejecting. This distinction relates to the Spirit’s ministry because the Spirit’s efficacy involves man’s acceptance. For, in order to produce life, it must be *accepted* by man (cf. Acts 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; I Thes. 1:6; 2:13; James 1:21; cf. also I Tim. 1:15; 4:9), accepted not by an act of mere intellectual assent but by an existential decision which involves his total personality and life.⁴⁵ “Hearing (ἀκούειν) reaches its goal only by believing (πιστεύειν)” (cf. Acts 4:4, 15:7), and believing proves itself to be true and genuine by doing (James 1:22, cf. I Pet. 2:8; 3:1).⁴⁶ The opposite of hearing and believing is hearing and rejecting. Rejecting the Spirit’s illumination and conviction results in condemning oneself, and the gospel—the power unto salvation—becomes a fragrance producing death rather than life.⁴⁷

Jerome Murphy-O’Connor’s survey of Greek words used in Pauline literature to express gospel acceptance provides lexical insight into what acceptance is.⁴⁸ The first verb that he studies is hearing, ἀκούω (transliterated akouō). The verb “to hear” is used seven times by Paul in the context of the reception of revelation; it is demanded by his presentation of revelation not as a vision but as the *word* of God.⁴⁹ Kittel writes, “The

⁴⁵Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament, 29–30.

⁴⁶Ibid., 30.

⁴⁷Ibid., 29.

⁴⁸Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul on Preaching* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), 217-232.

⁴⁹Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul on Preaching*, 217.

hearing of man represents correspondence to the revelation of the Word, and in biblical religion it is thus the essential form in which this divine revelation is appropriated.”⁵⁰

Murphy-O’Connor identifies two types of hearings in Pauline literature: mere-hearing and faith-hearing.⁵¹ Mere-hearing, because of dispositions reducible to proud obstinacy, remains outside the religious sphere on the material level of aural sensation (illocutionary disappointment).⁵² Faith-hearing is accompanied by genuine religious knowledge and is so closely bound up with faith as to be practically identifiable with it (illocutionary achievement).⁵³

What is the relationship between hearing and believing? Based on Romans 10, Murphy-O’Connor writes, “Faith depends on the spoken word of an authorized preacher, i.e., on the word as heard. Yet hearing alone is not faith; it is a reception of the word but only in a material sense. The Jews, for example, heard but did not obey. Hearing is a prerequisite to faith, but faith is not the inevitable consequence of hearing.”⁵⁴ Kittel also links hearing to faith along with obedience,

As is only natural, the content of hearing is determined by the content of the message. In the New Testament this is always the offering of salvation and ethical demand in one. Hearing, then, is always the reception both of grace and of the call to repentance. This means that the only marks to distinguish true hearing from purely physical hearing are faith (Mt. 8:10; 9:2; 17:20 etc.) and action (Mt. 7:16, 24, 26; R. 2:13 etc.). This is not the place to treat of the interrelationship of the two. It is surely evident, however, that NT hearing as reception of the declared will of God always implies affirmation of this will as the willing of salvation and repentance by the man who believes and acts. There thus arises, as the crowning concept of the obedience which consists in faith and the faith which consists in obedience.⁵⁵

⁵⁰Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 216.

⁵¹Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul on Preaching*, 220.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 222.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 222.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 219.

⁵⁵Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:220.

The next verb in Murphy-O'Connor's survey is receiving, δέχομαι (transliterated dechomai). The verb is used for the reception of the gospel—δέχεσθαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ is a recurrent phrase in (Ac. 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; cf. Jm. 1:21; 1 Th. 1:6; 2:13).⁵⁶ Based on three passages (1 Thess 1:6; 2:13; 1 Cor 2:14-15), Murphy-O'Connor makes two conclusions about the Spirit and the hearer's acceptance: (1) Without the activity of the Holy Spirit infusing a new spirit proportioned to the object, reception of the word of God is impossible. (2) When the Spirit is actively present, the word is received with joy whatever the difficulty.⁵⁷ The hearer's response of receiving (perlocutionary effect) the Word includes the ministry of the Spirit (Spirit-achieved). Kittel echoes the idea of receiving what the Spirit is proclaiming,

In hearing the message, however, man is liberated for decision in relation to it. Thus we read in 1 C. 2:14: ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ. Only when God speaks His Word and opens the understanding through the Spirit can man also decide. The divine claim of the Gospel sets man in the freedom of decision. This is the theological significance of the term δέχομαι.⁵⁸

Accepting, παραλαμβάνω (transliterated paralambanō), is the third verb and primarily refers to the reception of God's word in Pauline literature.⁵⁹ Paul employs it to describe his acceptance of the gospel (1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3; Gal. 1:12) as well as that of those to whom he transmitted it.⁶⁰ As used in Colossians 2:6-7, the verb is equivalent to faith, that is, a vital acceptance not only of Jesus as Christ and Lord, but also of the practical duties involved in this acceptance.⁶¹ Many occurrences of "accepting" carry the combination of reception and obedience: receive our instruction and live and please God

⁵⁶Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:54.

⁵⁷Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul on Preaching*, 225.

⁵⁸Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:54.

⁵⁹Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul on Preaching*, 225–26.

⁶⁰Ibid., 226.

⁶¹Ibid., 226.

(1 Thess 4:1), walk in Christ as you received Christ Jesus (Col 2:6), hold onto the message you received (1 Cor 15:1-2), do what you have received from me (Phil 4:9), the Word of God effectively works in you who believe what you received (1 Thess 2:13), and live according to the tradition received (2 Thess. 3:6). Accepting the message is receiving the message with trust followed by faithful obedience.

The fourth verb discussed by Murphy-O'Connor is learning, *μανθάνω* (transliterated *manthanō*) which means to gain knowledge.⁶² Paul's usage of "learning" includes the initial hearing of the gospel and the assimilation of the proclamation over a long period.⁶³ Two examples of continual trust of the initial instruction are Romans 16:17 and 2 Timothy 3:14, where Paul urges believers to continue trusting in the teaching they learned rather than the deception being spoken.⁶⁴ The word can convey more than learning information:

In Eph. 4:20 we find the phrase *ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν*. According to the context *μανθάνειν* has here more of the sense of *ἀκούειν* than *διδάσκεσθαι*. It implies full acceptance of Christ and His work, even in respect of the direction of life. Its ethical character, in the broadest sense, is thus clear. Explicitly or implicitly there stands behind the expression opposition to the thesis that the way to an ordered life is only by *μανθάνειν νόμον*. The new man is nourished by the Gospel, in which Christ does His work according to the plan and purpose of God. *μανθάνω* seems to be used in the same sense in 2 Tm. 3:14 and R. 16:17, here with reference to the apostolic *διδασχῆ*. And when Paul confesses in Phil. 4:11: *ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμι αὐτάρκης εἶναι*, this can only be because he has learned Christ (cf. the context).⁶⁵

The last verb in Murphy-O'Connor's survey is obeying, *ὑπακούω* (transliterated *hupakouō*), which means to follow instructions.⁶⁶ The NT teaches that one is a slave to the one they obey (Rom 6:16). Therefore, the NT commands that one does

⁶²Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 615.

⁶³Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul on Preaching*, 227.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 227.

⁶⁵Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 4:110.

⁶⁶Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1028.

not obey sin's desires (Rom 6:12) but rather one should obey from the heart (Rom 6:17) the faith (Acts 6:7), the gospel (Rom 10:16, 2 Thess 1:8), Paul's instructions (2 Thess 3:14), and Christ (Heb 5:9).⁶⁷ Obedience is the actions that result from hearing instruction or teaching.⁶⁸ Said differently, obedience is an intellectual assent translated into action through an accompanying surrender of the will.⁶⁹ For Murphy-O'Connor, this is the "perfect verb to express the full, vital acceptance of preaching."⁷⁰ He explains, "The basic meaning of the Greek *hupakouō* is 'to listen to', but, as its technical use to describe the function of a door-keeper indicates, it means 'to listen in an effective way', to listen and do. In other words, it is a listening that forms an indivisible unity with the appropriate response to the claim made."⁷¹

Murphy-O'Connor does not cover one verb, that is used numerous times for the acceptance of Christ and the gospel, which is to believe or trust, πιστεύω (transliterated *pisteuō*).⁷² The NT usage is not distinct from the Greek usage, meaning "to rely on, trust, or believe."⁷³ For the majority of the uses, the object that is believed in or trusted is Jesus or the gospel: the message of Christ (Acts 4:4), the good news of Jesus (Acts 8:12, Rom 1:16, 1 Cor 15:1-2), the Lord (Acts 9:42;16:31;18:8), him (Acts 10:43, Rom 10:11, Eph 1:13, Phil 1:29, 1 Tim 1:16, 1 Pet 1:8), Jesus (Rom 3:22, frequently in John), the resurrection of Jesus (Rom 10:9, 1 Thess 4:14), Christ Jesus (Gal 2:16), and his name (1 John 3:23;5:13).⁷⁴ This verb represents one responding to NT preaching by

⁶⁷Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:223–24.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 1:224.

⁶⁹Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul on Preaching*, 229.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 231.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 231.

⁷²Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 816–18.

⁷³Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 6:203.

⁷⁴There are numerous examples in the book of John of believing in Jesus Christ: 1:7, 1:12,

trusting in, believing, placing faith in, or putting confidence in the good news of Jesus Christ.

Based on the survey of the book of Acts and NT verbs of acceptance, the hearer's response to preaching is either believing and obeying (illocutionary achievement) or rejecting (illocutionary disappointment). This section explained what is meant by acceptance by surveying six verbs in NT for responding in belief: hearing (ἀκούω), receiving (δέχομαι), accepting (παραλαμβάνω), learning (μανθάνω), obeying (ὑπακούω), and trusting (πιστεύω). From these verbs, acceptance in the NT conveys a hearing that leads to faith, receiving the Spirit's work, obeying, mental assent that leads to actions of a surrendered will, gaining and growing in the knowledge of Christ, and placing one's confidence in Christ. Hearing is an essential means by which God reveals Himself and His desired conformity of man to Christ. It bears repeating: "Hearing is a prerequisite to faith, but faith is not the inevitable consequence of hearing."⁷⁵

Taxonomy of Perlocutions and Biblical Application

Perlocutionary acts are the aspect of oral communication the Spirit utilizes to achieve the applicability of the preached Word of God. While any given utterance's potential effects may be incalculable, the type of effects can be categorized. This section demonstrates that oral communication is viable for sermonic application by using the categories of perlocutionary effects to explain and express the Spirit's application of the spoken sermon. As stated above, the Spirit-filled accomplishments of preaching include the hearer accepting, believing, trusting, or adopting the communicative act's illocutionary force.

2:11, 3:15-18, 3:36, 4:39-42, 6:29, 6:35, 6:40, 6:47, 7:38-39, 8:24-31, 10:42, 11:25-27, 12:11, 12:46, 14:1, 14:11, 20:31.

⁷⁵Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul on Preaching*, 219.

This section begins with Gaines' perlocutionary taxonomy and then works through two biblical application surveys, Chapell and Doriani.⁷⁶ The purpose is to demonstrate that oral communication is a viable vehicle for the Spirit's sermonic application. Gaines' analysis shows that speech can affect the hearer's feelings, thoughts, and actions, making it a viable vehicle for Chapell's (instructional, situational, motivational, enablement) and Doriani's (duty, character, goals, discernment) explanations of sermonic application.

Gaines introduces his article by acknowledging the minimal work done with perlocutionary acts: "The development of speech act theory to which this distinction (dividing the speech act into three acts: locution, illocution, perlocution) has given rise has been significant, yet somehow disappointing insofar as recent scholars have directed their efforts almost exclusively to the elaboration of that element of speech act theory to which Austin and Searle have given the most exhaustive treatment, illocutionary acts. As a result of this trend in problem choice, almost no attention has been given to perlocutionary acts, an element in the theories of both Austin and Searle for which neither theorist attempted a complete analysis."⁷⁷

He identifies rhetoric as the field that has been most affected by the lack of treatment given to perlocutionary acts: "The current lack of a thorough treatment of the types of and conditions for perlocution has been felt most acutely, perhaps, in the field of rhetoric, because rhetoric—on the most inclusive account of its objectives—is principally

⁷⁶Robert N. Gaines, "Doing by Saying: Toward a Theory of Perlocution," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65, no. 2 (1979): 207–17; Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); Daniel M. Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2001).

⁷⁷Gaines, "Doing by Saying," 207.

concerned with instructing and persuading, acts which are unmistakably perlocutionary.”⁷⁸

Gaines acknowledges that Austin’s perlocutionary act definition is the foundation of his work, specifically three features: (1) perlocutionary acts are correlated with illocutionary acts, (2) perlocutionary acts produce consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, and (3) perlocutionary acts may be the product of the speaker’s intention.⁷⁹ One of Gaines’ contributions to Austin’s initial work is that he presents a “preliminary analysis of the types of perlocutionary acts.”⁸⁰ The benefit of his analysis is that it provides the types of effects caused by oral language (Table 3 below). Thus, the categories of effects establish speech’s viability for Spirit-achieved sermonic application.

Gaines follows Austin’s lead by approaching perlocutionary analysis from the perspective of the results or consequences caused by speech: “Production of the perlocutionary effect consummates the perlocutionary act.”⁸¹ Thus, it is “profitable to talk about perlocutionary acts in terms which refer to their effects.”⁸² He makes two remarks concerning the table: (1) as one moves from the left to the right in the table, the involvement of the hearer to consummate the perlocutionary effect increases, and (2) sub-categories one to three are perfected in affective or cognitive states while the other two sub-categories four and five are perfected in actions.

⁷⁸Gaines, “Doing by Saying,” 208.

⁷⁹Ibid., 209.

⁸⁰Ibid., 208.

⁸¹Ibid., 209.

⁸²Ibid., 209.

Table 3. Gaines' perlocutionary taxonomy⁸³

FEELINGS		THOUGHTS		ACTIONS
1	2	3	4	5
<i>Involuntary</i>	<i>Voluntary</i>	<i>Epistemic</i>	<i>Motivational</i>	<i>Practical</i>
Startle	Placate	Confuse	Convince (to)	“get hearer to
Amuse	Intimidate	Enlighten	Persuade (to)	do action” =
Surprise	Insult	Deceive	Inspire	“get H to ____
Shock	Entertain	Edify	Deter	(start)
Astonish	Anger	Teach	Incite	(continue)
	Frighten	Convince (that)	Dispose	(finish)
	Soothe	Persuade (that)		(stop)
	Humiliate			doing A”

For this section's purposes, Gaines' analysis provides the necessary deepening of Austin's definition of feelings, thoughts, and actions. The five sub-categories encapsulate the five primary perlocutionary effects that occur in a speech setting. Like Searle's illocutionary taxonomy establishes the "doing" of speech, Gaines' taxonomy establishes the baseline for what speech can accomplish. The examples provided for each sub-category express the category's concept well and help distinguish each category from the other categories. Gaines' table expresses SAT's belief that verbal communication can impact involuntary or voluntary feelings, the epistemic or motivational thoughts, and the practical actions of those involved.

⁸³Gaines, "Doing by Saying," 209.

The rest of this section utilizes Gaines' categories of perlocutionary effects to demonstrate that verbal speech is a capable utensil for Spirit-achieved application. The sermonic application includes both results and consequences; for example, an assertion can lead to the hearer adopting new truth (result) and the hearer being motivated to serve God in some capacity (consequence). Furthermore, one illocutionary act can have multiple purposes:

Sometimes speech has multiple purposes. One Wednesday night at a church dinner my middle daughter and I lingered briefly over the end of our meal before we departed for our separate activities. Knowing our time was short, I was disappointed when a friendly interloper sat down and struck up an amiable but aimless conversation. When he paused, I put my arm around my child and said, "Did you know that this is the sweetest girl in the whole world?" With this remark I hoped to accomplish three things. First, I wanted to *assure* my daughter, "You matter to me; I will not stop paying attention to you every time an adult chats with me." Second, I showed that I wanted to *include* her in the conversation. Third, I sought to *affirm* my affection for her, declaring, implicitly, "I hold you in high esteem and gladly say so." Thus my words had three intended effects. They applied three ways.⁸⁴

The categories of perlocutionary effects are not created based on which illocutionary act produces them. Instead, they were created based on effects that may be caused by any illocutionary act. Also, illocutionary acts may result in any category depending on the intention of the speaker. The following surveys of biblical application aim to show that Chapell's and Doriani's approaches to application are achievable by the Spirit working through communication.

Chapell presents sermonic application as answering four questions: *What* does God now require of me? *Where* does he require it of me? *Why* must I do what he requires? *How* can I do what God requires?⁸⁵ These four questions guide and direct application to include attitudinal and behavioral aspects:

Mature preachers do not ignore behavior, but they carefully build an attitudinal foundation for whatever actions they say God requires. This more than a rhetorical tactic. Its source is the biblical insight that out of the heart comes the issues of life

⁸⁴Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 43.

⁸⁵Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 214–22.

(Prov. 4:23). Sermons that merely instruct—don't drink, don't smoke, don't lust, don't procrastinate—will lead to little spiritual maturity, even if parishioners do all they are told. Many applications exhort action (e.g., share the gospel with a neighbor, turn from a sinful practice, give to a worthy cause), but just as many should identify an attitude needing change (e.g., prejudice, pride, or selfishness) or reinforce a faith commitment (e.g., grasping the freedom of forgiveness, taking comfort in the truths of the resurrection, or renewing hope on the basis of God's sovereignty). Transformation of conduct *and* heart are both legitimate aims of application.⁸⁶

The first application component is identifying what God requires of the hearer.

The preacher answers this question “by providing instructions that reflect the biblical principles found in the biblical text.”⁸⁷ These universal principles are then applied by giving instructions consistent with and derived from the text that direct believers in present actions, attitudes, and/or beliefs.⁸⁸ The means of instructional specificity is the Spirit using preaching to enlighten, edify, teach, convince, or persuade (verbs from Gaines table) the audience concerning the preaching text's principles. As labeled by Chapell, instructional specificity uses oral communication's ability to impact the hearer's thoughts, resulting in Spirit-achieved epistemic changes.

The second application component identifies where in life this biblical principle matters, or said differently, identifying the situational specificity. The emphasis is on identifying where the instructional material is applicable in the multiple life situations represented by the audience. Chapell provides ample examples of where a simple principle can be applied to multiple and specific situations: Building proper relationships (with God, family, friends, coworkers, church people, etc.), reconciling conflicts (in marriage, family, work, church, etc.), handling difficult situations (stress, debt, unemployment, grief, fatigue, etc.), overcoming weakness and sin (dishonesty, anger, addiction, lust, doubt, lack of discipline, etc.), lack or improper use of resources

⁸⁶Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 210–11.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 214–15.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 215.

(time, treasures, talents, etc.), meeting challenges and using opportunities (education, work in or out of church, witnessing, missions, etc.), taking responsibility (home, church, work, finances, future, etc.), honoring God (worship, confession, prayer, devotions, not compartmentalizing life, etc.), and concern for social/world problems (poverty, racism, abortion, education, injustice, war, etc.).⁸⁹

Applications that are true to expository preaching's goals explain how believers today have to live in specific situations to remain faithful to Scripture.⁹⁰ The aim is for the application to “sink deep into individual experience rather than skip across the surface of life's possibilities.”⁹¹ Situational specificity is emotionally applying the biblical principle to the listener by helping them visualize or experience the implications of the truth. As they visualize or experience the truth, they feel the significance and the weight of the application in their specific situation.

So while application needs to teach, it also needs to have an emotional impact upon the hearer's reality. By providing situational details and developed examples, sermonic application impacts the hearer's emotions, both involuntary and voluntary. The mentioning of a particular situation may shock or catch the hearer off guard. Or, the hearer may voluntarily begin to wrestle as they connect with one of the examples emotionally. Situational specificity—feeling the biblical truth's weighty significance—is explained linguistically with the perlocutionary effects of feelings and knowledge. The hearer will not be limited to only *knowing* the biblical truth but also *feeling* and *emotionally experiencing* the biblical truth in their lives through the perlocutionary

⁸⁹Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 217–18.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 218.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 217.

effects achieved by the Spirit with the preached Word. The mind analyzes and thinks through the logical implications as the heart experiences the reality of such implications.

Application's third component is motivation; why should I do things that God requires of me? We need only consider the example of the Pharisees to recall that it is more than possible to do all the right things for all the wrong reasons and to be no holier than those whose behavior is far less moral.⁹² Preachers must be committed to biblically motivating the hearer towards faithfulness and avoiding sinful legalism or lawlessness. If we serve God primarily because we believe he will love us less if we do not, punish us more if we do less, or withhold blessing until we are sufficiently holy, then we are not obeying God for his glory but are pursuing our own self-interest.⁹³ Chapell identifies guilt, greed, and selfishness as some frequent and erroneous motivators for pursuing God.

Listeners who fully apprehend the grace of God toward them will also discover their greatest strength for obedience, which is a greater love for God that produces a desire to please him—a desire that also provides their greatest satisfaction when it is fulfilled.⁹⁴ Thus, application includes a motivational aspect of stirring the listener to desire faithfulness to the Lord because of their love and appreciation of God's actions and nature. The sermon is capable of providing such motivation as created by God to do so. Biblical preaching can convince one to repent and believe in Christ, persuade one to cast away an idol, inspire one to be missional, and deter one from a sinful lifestyle (verbs borrowed from Gaines' sub-category four).

Once again, the assertions of what God has done through Christ for God's people are not strictly for informational purposes. Teaching gospel assertions provides one with the cognitive understanding of Jesus Christ, and it also can motivate

⁹²Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 219.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 219.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 220.

(perlocutionary effect) one to godliness. Spirit-achieved perlocutionary effects include inspiring the hearer to respond out of love and appreciation for God’s grace. An assertion is declared. Illocutionary success occurs when the hearer understands both content and force. Lastly, the illocutionary success leads to perlocutionary effects: adoption of truth and motivation derived from love and appreciation for God.

The fourth and final component of Chapell’s application is enablement; how can I do what God requires? In application, the preacher needs “to supply the means of listener’s faithfulness.”⁹⁵ The danger of not including the means of faithfulness is that preaching “simply tells someone to do what in their situation they have no means to accomplish.”⁹⁶ To avoid such danger, the preacher should provide the practical steps and the spiritual resources that make the application attainable.⁹⁷ Chapell unpacks enablement as providing what to do (flee places of evil, seek mature counsel, count to ten), encouraging the means of grace (prayer, study, and fellowship), but ultimately, teaching and emphasizing dependency on God. He writes, “It does no good for an application’s principle to have biblical precedent if a preacher suggests (or allows) purely human means to fulfill biblical commands. Our power to obey is entirely through our union with Christ (John 15:5).”⁹⁸

As with the previous three components, the perlocutionary effects of language include the ability to enable faithfulness: teaching (epistemic), inspiration (motivation), actions (practical). The verbs of Gaines’ table for practical effects (sub-category five) easily express Chapell’s examples of enabling application—practical steps: start fleeing from evil, continue to seek godly counsel, start counting to ten, start spiritual disciplines,

⁹⁵Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 220.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 221.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 221.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 221–22.

and continue to fellowship with the community of God.⁹⁹ Thus, language can call one to act a certain way (practical perlocutionary effect) and at the same time teach them the lesson of dependency on God to do such action (epistemic and motivational perlocutionary effects). Preaching is capable through the Spirit to teach the full union of Christ: one's position in Christ and one's practical progression towards Christlikeness.

SAT's explanation of perlocutionary effects explains and expresses how Chapell's sermonic application is achievable. His commitment to fleshing out one's union with Christ (dependence and doing) is achievable with language's ability to cause multiple effects. Perlocutionary effects make the significance of the sermon a reality, accomplishing Chapell's desire for application to grant "present significance to a text's enduring meaning."¹⁰⁰ Gaines' analysis of possible perlocutionary effects explains how Chapell's four components can be applied and used by the Spirit to accomplish God's desires for all who hear the sermon.

Doriani views preachers as the interpretive "midwives of communication, hired especially for the difficult cases. The task of biblical interpretation, stripped to its essentials, is to mediate an ancient, authoritative message to audiences having difficulties grasping Scripture's meaning and relevance."¹⁰¹ He believes that "a God-centered approach to the relevance of Scripture has two foci: knowing the God who redeems and conforming ourselves to him."¹⁰² Therefore, Doriani defines application as promoting a relationship with God and conforming the hearer to God.¹⁰³ SAT has influenced his approach to biblical understanding and application, "I attempt to use the insights of these

⁹⁹Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 222; Gaines, "Doing by Saying," 209.

¹⁰⁰Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 214.

¹⁰¹Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 82.

¹⁰²Ibid., 13.

¹⁰³Ibid., 14.

scholars (SAT theorists) by speaking more simply of the meaning—what the author intends to convey by his word—and the significance—what readers out to get from his words.¹⁰⁴ He states,

Under ordinary conditions, communicators intend to do things with their words. That is, when we speak or write according to the conventions of communication, we choose words to convey a meaning that our audience will find significant so that it will thus achieve some goal or effect. Speech moves and persuades. With words we warn, encourage, promise, persuade, command, commission, pardon and apologize, embrace and reject. Pointless announcements annoy us. Chatterers embarrass themselves if they ask, “What was I saying?” or “What was I driving at?” We shake our heads at stories that go nowhere.¹⁰⁵

Doriani’s four categories of application pattern themselves after the four categories that ethicists have used to systematize people’s moral questions: (1) What should I do? That is, what is my *duty*? (2) Who should I be? That is, how can I become the person or obtain the *character* that lets me do what is right? (3) To what causes should we devote our life energy? That is, what *goals* should we pursue? (4) How can we distinguish truth from error? That is, how can we gain *discernment*?¹⁰⁶ The sermon considers how to answer these questions from the Bible through interpretation (taking Bible to the people) and application (bringing people to the Bible).¹⁰⁷ The four categories of application include duty, character, goals, and discernment.

¹⁰⁴Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 42n1.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 42. Doriani gives the following examples to illustrate his conviction about the “doing” of speech: “At home, even the simplest statements have intended effects. Suppose a father walks by a bathroom and observes, ‘There is a wet towel on the floor.’ If a wet-headed child peeks out of her room and says, ‘You’re right, Dad; there is a towel on the floor!’ and ducks back into her room, will the father be pleased at her agreement? No, for he meant that the owner and operator of the offending towel should move it. Similarly, if before a family dinner the matriarch announces, ‘Wash up and begin to gather.’ When she performs the final inspection and declares, ‘There is no salt on the table,’ she expects one of her adjutants to fetch it. After prayer, Aunt Polly may pass a platter of Cousin Bob, whispering, ‘Here is the turkey.’ Cousin Bob would err, in this context, if he replied, ‘Yes, here it is,’ as if the goal were to confirm, by two witnesses, the location of the bird. Polly expects Bob to take the plate, serve himself, and pass it on. When the hostess later inquires, ‘Would you like ice cream or sherbet for dessert?’ and someone replies, ‘You know, I haven’t had sherbet for a while,’ she knows to place another tally by ‘sherbet.’ Ibid., 42–43.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 97–98.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 97.

Doriani's first category is duty. This area of application is necessary because when individuals, perhaps Christians, encounter a moral situation, they need counsel, they need to know what to do, and the possible outcomes are right or wrong.¹⁰⁸ Application of duty looks to answer two key questions: what is our duty? What does the Bible teach us to do in this situation?¹⁰⁹ Doriani writes, "Duties are the laws or ground rules of human interaction. They may be universal commands or prohibitions governing all personal relationships. Or they may be particular and temporary."¹¹⁰ The concept of duty rests on Scripture—from the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20) to the Sermon on the Mount and the hortatory sections of the Epistles.¹¹¹

Conceptually, the preacher uses his preaching text to show godly duties and tell what those duties are. Practically, the Spirit uses the preacher's sermon to communicate what these biblical duties are and how to act in faithfulness to them. Perlocutionary effects can change one's understanding of truth (epistemic), motivating one to act righteously (motivational), and getting people to behave a certain way (practical). As preaching does multiple illocutionary acts (asserting, commanding, promising, and expressing), the Spirit achieves the perlocutionary results and consequences of those illocutionary acts. When the sermon's duties are followed, then the perlocutionary acts may be described as obedience, righteousness, and sound, while the absence of such effects leads to disobedience, immorality, and irresponsibility.¹¹² Preaching's oral nature does have the capabilities of mediating Scripture's commands

¹⁰⁸Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 101–2.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 101–2.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 103.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 103.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, 103.

into a hearer's actions with Spirit achieved perlocutionary effects of obedience and disobedience.

Doriani's second category is character. This application focuses on answering the ethical questions Christians have when they encounter a moral situation: How must I change if I am to be holy? Who am I already, in Christ? How can I become more like Christ?¹¹³ Character is the distinguishing nature or essence of a person.¹¹⁴ God is involved in the work of building a Christian's character—revivifying the heart and fashioning a new nature within them.¹¹⁵ Doriani establishes character as an aim of the biblical revelation:

From start to finish the Bible addresses character. God formed and tested the character of men such as Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. The prophets lament Israel's hardheartedness—and promise that God will make their hearts new (Jer. 9:26; 17:9; 31:31-34). The apostles penned thirty lists of virtues and vices, that is, positive and negative character traits. Jesus said a good character produces good deeds: "Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit" (Matt. 7:17-18). Paul agreed that good deeds are the spontaneous result of the Spirit's life in us, of a new heart and mind (Rom. 6-8; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 4:17-32).¹¹⁶

Character entails the capacity to act on Christian instruction and comprehend the connection between who we are and what we do.¹¹⁷ The demand of addressing character in the sermonic application is trifold: teach the character of Christ, stir the heart to love godliness, and motivate trusting the Spirit over the flesh. The preaching event can accomplish these tasks by using Spirit-filled assertions to cause perlocutionary effects upon the hearers' voluntary feelings (stirring heart to godliness), knowledge (teaching the character of Christ), and will (living in the Spirit). For example, as evident with Gaines'

¹¹³Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 102.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 105.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 105.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 105–6.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 106.

category of feelings, speech is a viable vehicle to motivate one to love honesty, humility, and love while hating deception, pride, and hate.

Like Chapell’s emphasis of grace-motivated application, Doriani stresses “union with Christ” motivation—knowing who one is in Christ and whom one becomes with Christ. He writes,

Instruction in character begins with God. First, we tell believers they *already have a new character* through their rebirth by the Holy Spirit and by their union with Christ. *They are a new creation*, saints from the day of salvation (1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1) (epistemic). Second, because God is at work in us, we form our character as we work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12-13) (feelings/practical).¹¹⁸

The sermonic application should teach them about aiming (motivation) to become in lifestyle, whom we already are by grace (epistemic).¹¹⁹ The guidelines for preaching character include four “do’s:” (1) Remind people that they are a new creation in Christ (epistemic), (2) Show God’s teachings about who the Christian is and who a Christian becomes (epistemic, motivational), (3) Urge people to examine their character and motives (feelings), and (4) Help people see discipleship as the spontaneous manifestation of a renewed heart first and as the result of moral striving second (feelings, epistemic, motivation, practical).¹²⁰

The third category of application is goals—using Scripture to establish how they should utilize their time and energy. Questions that people ask concerning goals include: Where should I get a sense of direction? What are the best means for achieving godly ends? How can I seek to change the world so it conforms to God’s plan?¹²¹

¹¹⁸Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 108.

¹¹⁹Shaping application of character around the two foci of who one is in Christ and who one becomes in Christ is a result of biblical theology. Doriani writes, “In biblical theology, character has two aspects—character as *definitive gift* from God and character as *progressive work*. The gift comes first, then we strive to lay hold of it. We aim to become in deed who we already are by grace.” *Ibid.*, 133.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 144.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 102.

Because what people do depends on where they are going and what they might want to accomplish, addressing the hearers' goals is an important commitment of application.¹²² Establishing biblical goals provides a vision and motivation of the biblical worldview. Hence, Christian preachers are responsible for helping people choose and fulfill a wise goal.¹²³

As asked of previous application components, how is language equipped to accomplish the biblical mandate of having godly goals for one's time and energy? Goals demand that one have an understanding of what God desires and motivation to stay committed. Both of these demands can be achieved by the Spirit using the sermon's exposition, illustration, and application of the Word of God. The verbs in Gaines' fourth category (motivation) illustrate oral communication's ability to motivate in the preaching event: *convince* one of a godly goal, *persuade* one to sacrifice one's time and energy for a godly goal, *inspire* one to persevere towards a godly goal, and it can *deter* one away from an ungodly aspiration.

The fourth and final type of application is discernment, which teaches people how to see the situation, so they know how to respond. The application addresses the following questions: how can I gain discernment? How can I resist what is false in the mind-set and customs of this world? How can I gain wisdom from God and the church?¹²⁴ Doriani defines discernment as "the insight, the understanding, the perception, to see things as they are from God's perspective. It is the ability to discriminate between

¹²²Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 102. Doriani writes, "Our goals determine where we spend our life's energy. When we know our goals, we know where we are going and why." Ibid., 110.

¹²³Ibid., 110. Doriani justifies goals being part of the Christian life based on three truths: (1) we are made in the image of God who has goals for all creation and particularly goals for his people, (2) God has created the world in a predictable fashion so that goals are realistically predicted and achieved, (3) God gives unique goals to particular individuals, and (4) the idea of spiritual gifts show that God has specific purposes for people. Ibid., 110–11.

¹²⁴Ibid., 102.

biblical and unbiblical voices within competing worldviews and concepts of the good life.”¹²⁵ Discernment enables us to stand back and inspect the moral landscape.¹²⁶ Doriani explains the importance of discernment in relationship to the other aims of application:

Duty stresses what we ought to do, character examines who we ought to be, and goals touch upon what we ought to seek; discernment explores the competing ideas about our duty, about godly character, and about suitable goals. Discernment helps Christians find their way among the competing answers to these questions. It enables us to see things God’s way. It detects the corrupting influences in the self or the culture that lead us to misconstrue our duties, develop vices, and adopt foolish goals. Thus discernment is less a partner of duty, character, and goals than it is a servant of them. It aligns our perspectives with God’s, so we can see duty, character, and goals as He does.¹²⁷

The preacher should desire to impact the hearers’ discernment by teaching them how to think and have a spiritual perception of their situation critically. Training and re-training the mind to critically think through situations with biblical principles is an epistemic exercise that preaching can conduct. Utilizing the theocentric content communicated through the preacher, the Spirit can retrain the mind of the hearer. Using speech, the Spirit can help the hearer feel the disappointment in a lack of discernment and the joy that comes from godly discernment. As the preacher gives different examples and consequences of good and poor discernment, the Spirit can stir the hearer’s feelings to love and long for godly discernment.

While discernment is a servant of the other categories of application, communication is a servant of all sermonic application. God uses His creation, human communication, to reveal Himself (knowing God) and change and conform man to godly duties, character, goals, and discernment. The theocentric, Spirit-filled, and Spirit-achieved sermon uses oral communication to provide God’s answer to four questions: (1)

¹²⁵Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 113.

¹²⁶Ibid., 114.

¹²⁷Ibid., 114.

What is our duty? (2) What is a noble character, and how can we obtain or develop it? (3) What goals should we pursue? (4) In a cacophony of competing voices, how can we distinguish right from wrong?¹²⁸

By using Gaines' analysis of perlocutionary effects, the sermonic application is explainable and achievable through oral communication. Whether as a result or a consequence, the locutionary and the illocutionary acts of speech impact the feelings, thoughts, and actions (perlocutionary effects). Thus, as defined by Chapell and Doriani, biblical application is achievable through the Spirit's application of the preached Word. Application is a commitment of the preacher and an achievement of the Spirit,

Application is certainly a divine gift, but not all divine gifts are unmediated. We pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," yet we are also commanded to work for it (Matt. 6:11; Prov. 6:6-11; 28:19; 2 Thess. 3:6-12). Similarly, we both pray for wisdom and search it out (Prov. 2:1-8; James 1:5; 3:13). So too with application. It is a gift when God makes words strike their targets, yet he takes our words for his arrows.¹²⁹

Conclusion

The chapter introduces SAT's perlocutionary act as the consequential by-products of the locutionary act and the illocutionary act. The perlocutionary act is consummated with the presence of perlocutionary effects upon the feelings, thoughts, and actions of anyone involved in the communicative act. While illocutionary acts express and explain the "doing" of speech, perlocutionary acts express and explain the "effects" of speech. The question answered in the theory of perlocutionary acts is what oral communication can achieve with the locutionary act and the illocutionary act?

Perlocutionary effects are understood in two categories: results (intrinsic/conventional) and consequences (extrinsic/circumstantial). Because of the circumstantial nature of consequences, the possible effects that one illocutionary act may

¹²⁸Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 121.

¹²⁹Ibid., 29.

cause is indeterminable. Perlocutionary effects determine illocutionary achievement: the occurrence of the expected result is an illocutionary achievement, while the absence of that result is an illocutionary disappointment. Perlocutionary acts are the means of communication utilized by the Spirit to accomplish sermonic application—saving the lost, sanctifying the saved, and condemning the unbeliever. The theory of perlocutionary acts strengthens the claim of chapter five that preaching is more than transferring information.

SAT provides a linguist explanation of sermonic application that supports the biblical survey of NT responses and the application approaches of Chapell and Doriani. The theory of perlocutionary acts establishes that language can impact the feelings, thoughts, and actions of anyone involved in the preaching event. The stated desire for the sermon to be transformational and address the whole of a person, as stated in the chapter's introduction, is achievable through verbal communication. The chapter shows that the multiple illocutionary acts that construct preaching can lead to multiple results and consequences. Gaines' analysis shows that speech can affect the hearer's feelings, thoughts, and actions, making it a viable vehicle for Chapell's (instructional, situational, motivational, enablement) and Doriani's (duty, character, goals, discernment) explanations of sermonic application.

The chapter shows that the Holy Spirit is a necessary participant for linguistic effects to become spiritual illumination, conviction, and application. The Spirit utilizes the Spirit-filled illocutions to establish and develop the hearer's union with Christ. The Spirit brings the significance of the text upon the hearer's emotion, mind, and will. The Spirit is responsible for providing illumination for understanding (illocutionary success) of the theocentric propositions (locutions), resulting in a perlocutionary result (illocutionary achievement) and spiritual consequences. For example, the Spirit utilizes the assertive of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross to teach the atonement of Christ (epistemic), to stir the heart towards love and gratitude (feelings), to inspire service

(motivational), and to call one to die to oneself and follow Christ (practical). The effectiveness of the preached Word is a derivative of the Spirit's presence and power.

The chapter shows that the preaching of God's Word encounters two responses: acceptance (illocutionary achievement) and rejection (illocutionary disappointment). The illocutionary achievement of acceptance is fleshed out in the NT as placing one's faith, receiving the work of the Spirit, obeying the message, gaining and growing in the knowledge of Christ, and placing one's trust/confidence in Christ. True acceptance is when hearing reaches its goal of believing, and believing leads to a life of genuine doing. The gospel comprehension must be matched with confidence in the gospel, and confidence must be matched with full surrender to the gospel. All three of these requirements—mental comprehension, trust from the heart, surrendered will—are reachable and achievable through the Spirit's ministry in the preaching event.

Chapter five establishes that a preacher can be successful—faithful to his God-given calling—when the hearer understands his illocutionary acts. Success is reachable without perlocutionary effects because the preacher is called to herald, testify, steward, and serve the Word of God. However, the preacher should desire more than being successful—faithful to a call—by including the sermonic application that can lead to Spirit-achieved transformation. Biblical preaching includes a God-given motivation that hopes for spiritual transformation as a result of their faithful proclamation. The preacher should pray and prepare for illocutionary success (being understood) and perlocutionary achievement (resulting in transformation).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Haddon Robinson clearly articulates the difficulty of defining and explaining the preaching event, “Preaching is a living process involving God, the preacher, and the congregation, and no definition can pretend to capture that dynamic.”¹ Despite the challenge, Robinson attempts a working definition, “Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his listeners.”² This dissertation assists Robinson’s definition of biblical preaching by providing a linguistic explanation for the concept of “communication.”

This dissertation utilizes SAT to explain and express biblical preaching’s communicative acts between the Holy Spirit, preacher, and hearer. SAT demonstrates that behind the idea of “communication” are speech acts that consist of locutions, illocutions, and perlocutions. Linguistically, preaching’s communication is explained as an utterance of propositional content with an intentional force that aims to cause effects following the hearer’s understanding. Adding theological convictions to this linguistic explanation demonstrates biblical preaching to be Spirit-empowered and anointed utterances of theocentric content (locution) with Spirit-filled force (illocution) that aims for Spirit-achieved transformation (perlocution).

¹Haddon W Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 19.

²Ibid., 19-20.

Demonstrating the aforementioned linguistic explanation of biblical preaching requires the dissertation to establish what biblical preaching is, and second, what SAT is. The first two chapters provide a necessary, yet limited, theology of preaching. Chapter one establishes the following theological convictions concerning biblical preaching: the Bible is inspired by God, the preacher is a servant of God, the gathered audience needs God, and the Holy Spirit, God Himself, empowers preaching. The chapter asserts biblical preaching as a communication of the explanation and application of God's infallible and inerrant Word by a called servant of God who desires to transform the hearers' incompleteness through the Spirit's illumination and application of the sermon.

Chapter two strengthens chapter one's convictions by surveying Adam's theological foundations for the ministry of the Word. A biblical foundation for any ministry of God's Word includes the truths that God has spoken, God's revelation of His acts and speech is written, and God has commissioned His church to preach His revelation. Thus, biblical preaching is God's demand for His secured revelation of His written acts and speech to be preached. Biblical preaching is a theological necessity because God has spoken, the Bible is written, and the church is commissioned. The chapter concludes with four specific theological convictions of the preaching event that SAT can linguistically explain: the centrality of God's Word, the mediating of God's authority, the responsibility of the preacher, the Spirit's ministry (authentication, conviction, application), and the potential impact of preaching on the hearer's spirituality.

The second piece needed to demonstrate SAT's ability to explain and express biblical preaching is the understanding of the speech theory itself. Chapter three presents the reader with an introduction to the speech theory and establishes the concepts and vocabulary used in chapters four through six. The chapter shows speech to be three acts: locution, illocution, and perlocution. These three acts are the components of every utterance—someone saying something to someone about something. The performative

nature of language, parole, is highlighted in SAT because it shows how speakers add force to an uttered proposition, resulting in consequential effects.

With the foundations of biblical preaching and SAT, chapters four through six work through each act (locution, illocution, perlocution) to provide the reader with a linguistic explanation of the authority of preaching, the responsibility of the preacher, the Holy Spirit, and the effects of preaching. The aim is to explain the triologue conversation about God's Word between the Spirit, preacher, and hearer.

One thread of linguistic explanation is how the preacher mediates the authority of God's Word. The authority of preaching is directly connected to the authority of the Bible. When the sermon's propositions are theocentric—align and serve God's Word—the preacher is speaking with God's authority. The first step to having authority in preaching is committing to serving and aligning one's propositional content to the Word of God in all areas of the sermon: explanation, illustration, and application. Every illocutionary act needs content, and in preaching, that content is constructed of text-driven truth assertions, text-driven commands, text-driven expressions, and text-driven promises.

The second step in the mediation of God's authority is the preacher's illocutionary acts. The preacher acts as a midwife of biblical interpretation and explanation through the sermon's explanation, illustration, and application. Each element of the sermon utilizes the force of verbal speech (illocutions) to communicate more than biblical content but also to communicate God's authoritative force through assertions, commands, promises, and expressives. Using the SAT's term "uptake," preaching's communication includes the understanding of both the proposition (theocentric locutions) and the force (Spirit-filled illocutions). Preaching's locutionary acts and illocutionary acts mediate the authority of God.

The second thread of linguistic explanation throughout chapters four through six is the Holy Spirit's role in the preaching event. The Spirit is theologically credited for

the compulsion, empowerment, anointing, illumination, confirmation, authentication, conviction, and application in biblical preaching. The Spirit's presence and power are required in every part of the preacher's speech act. The locutionary act consists of two parts: utterance act and propositional act. The Spirit is actively involved in both of them; compels and empowers the utterance act and illuminates the preacher's understanding and construction of text-driven propositions.

The Spirit's role continues in illocutionary acts. There are many components in an illocutionary act: illocutionary point, mode of achievement, psychological state, propositional content, the direction of fit, and degree of strength. The hearer deciphers how and to what degree the speaker uses these components to accomplish his speech act. In preaching, the Spirit works with the preacher to fulfill the necessary components to the necessary degree to accomplish kingdom illocutions. Spirit-filled preaching means the Spirit is responsible for illocutionary components that the preacher cannot provide, such as illumination of spiritual understanding, authenticating the preacher's position as God's ambassador, and confirming the validity or trustworthiness of a divine promise. The Spirit also works in the hearer to bring about illocutionary success by illuminating the hearer's understanding of the illocutionary act.

The Spirit also is at work with the perlocutionary effects of preaching. Perlocutionary acts are the consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, and actions of anyone involved in the communicative act. The Spirit utilizes speech's ability to impact the hearer and speaker to accomplish preaching's applicational aims as defined by Chapell (instructional, situational, motivational, enablement) and Doriani (duty, character, goals, discernment). Preaching's desire for spiritual transformation following the preaching of God's Word is accomplished by the Spirit's work of convicting and applying the theocentric content delivered with Spirit-filled force. SAT can illumine how the Spirit is present in biblical preaching from the sermon's construction to the hearer's transformation.

The third thread of explanation is the preacher's role. Stott presents the preacher's responsibilities as stewarding, heralding, testifying to, and serving the Word of God. The NT defines preaching as declaring (κηρύσσω, εὐαγγελίζω, διδάσκω, παρακαλεῶ) and testifying (μαρτυρέω) to the good news of Jesus Christ (εὐαγγέλιον, κήρυγμα) that introduces or reminds the audience of the presence of God's kingdom along with the necessary response of repenting and believing. The preacher's faithfulness to accomplish Stott's pastoral responsibilities and the NT description of preaching is his locutionary and illocutionary acts. Whether a called man has been faithful to God's commission to preach, as defined by Stott and the NT, depends on his commitment to declare (utterance act) the Word of God (theocentric propositions) with the force of teaching Jesus Christ and calling for repentance and faith (illocutionary acts). Faithfulness for the preacher is illocutionary success—being understood.

The hearer's perspective of the preaching event is the fourth thread of explanation that SAT provides for biblical preaching. Following the preacher's theocentric locutionary act and Spirit-filled illocutionary act, either the hearer does (illocutionary success) or does not (illocutionary failure) understand the speaker's force and content. Hearing and understanding are prerequisites for any perlocutionary effects. The necessity of understanding the illocutionary content and force aligns with the biblical conviction that faith comes from hearing. One must hear and understand the preacher's theocentric locution and Spirit-filled illocution (illocutionary success/uptake) before any expectation of salvation and sanctification is possible (perlocutionary transformation).

Following the hearer's understanding (illocutionary success), two outcomes are possible for communicative acts: acceptance (illocutionary achievement) or rejection (illocutionary disappointment). SAT's two possible outcomes of oral communication linguistically express the theological pattern of acceptance and rejection to preaching in the book of Acts. If the hearer accepts the illocutionary act (illocutionary achievement), then perlocutionary effects upon the hearer's feelings, thoughts, and actions occur. The

NT expresses acceptance (illocutionary achievement) with verbs like hearing (ἀκούω), receiving (δέχομαι), accepting (παραλαμβάνω), learning (μανθάνω), obeying (ὕπακούω), and trusting (πιστεύω). When these verbs are used to express acceptance (illocutionary achievement), the following perlocutionary effects occur: faith, receiving the Spirit's work, obeying, mental assent that leads to actions of a surrendered will, gaining and growing in the knowledge of Christ, and placing one's confidence in Christ.

In conclusion, SAT can help to explain the roles of all parties involved in the preaching event: the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, the preacher, and the audience. The sermon's propositions serve and align with the authority of God's Word. The Spirit empowers and compels the preacher to utter theocentric propositions, fills the necessary components of the preacher's illocutionary acts, and provides the hearer with illumination, confirmation, authentication, conviction, and application necessary for perlocutionary transformation. The preacher faithfully declares God's Word through the illocutionary acts of asserting, commanding, expressing, and promising. The hearer is responsible for seeking to understand what the Spirit is illuminating and then deciding whether to accept or reject asserted biblical truth, promised biblical hope, commanded biblical actions, or expressions of God and godliness. Many claims are made that preaching is more than transferring information for the aim of mental assent, and this dissertation has shown them correct.³

This study has focused on the ability of SAT to explain the theological convictions of preaching, yet more attention could be given to the relationship between SAT and preaching. For example, this dissertation determines that the illocutionary

³Homileticians who state that preaching is more than transferring information: Steven J. Lawson, "The Passion of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of 1 Timothy 4:13-16," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159, no. 633 (January 1, 2002): 86; Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 17; Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 25; Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 26; Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!: A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 268.

category of declarative does not apply to the preaching event; however, a more narrowed and focused study of that relationship would strengthen such a claim. While this dissertation broadly covered SAT's linguistic explanation of preaching, multiple studies could build upon it by exploring the depths of each act (locution, illocution, perlocution) in preaching.

One example of such a study would be a narrow look at the components of illocutionary acts and how the Spirit and preacher fulfill them. Along with deepening the work of the components covered in this dissertation, a study could look into the ones not covered:

- (1) Differences in relations to the rest of the discourse
- (2) Differences in propositional content that are determined by illocutionary force indicating devices
- (3) Differences between those acts that must always be speech acts, and those that can be, but need not be performed as speech acts
- (4) Differences between those acts that require extra-linguistic institutions for their performance and those that do not
- (5) Differences between those acts where the corresponding illocutionary verb has a performative use and those where it does not
- (6) Differences in the style of performance of the illocutionary act⁴

These components could deepen the linguistic explanation of preaching's illocutionary acts and answer with more specificity how a preacher asserts, commands, promises, and expresses. As acknowledged by Gaines, speech act theorists have not spent a tremendous amount of time and energy developing the theory of perlocutionary acts.⁵ As SAT continues to develop its theory on perlocutionary acts, strengthening of this dissertation's explanation of perlocutionary acts and preaching would be logical.

SAT's linguistic explanation helps explain and express the mentioned but not often elaborated verbal element of biblical preaching. The following definitions for

⁴John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. (1979; repr., Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2-8.

⁵Robert N Gaines, "Doing by Saying: Toward a Theory of Perlocution," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65, no. 2 (1979): 207.

biblical preaching can benefit from this dissertation’s linguistic and biblical lens placed upon the preaching event. The words in each definition that represent the communication of preaching are italicized for emphasis.

The words “message,” “explains,” and “disclose” of Chapell’s expository preaching definition benefit from the findings of this dissertation,

An expository sermon may be defined as a *message* whose structure and thought are derived from a biblical text, that covers the scope of the text, and that *explains* the features and context of the text in order to *disclose* the enduring principles for faithful thinking, living, and worship intended by the Spirit, who inspired the text.⁶

Mohler represents the communicative nature of preaching with the words “presentation,” “application,” and “makes clear:”

Expository preaching is that mode of Christian preaching that takes as its central purpose the *presentation* and *application* of the text of the Bible. All other issues and concerns are subordinated to the central task of *presenting* the biblical text. As the Word of God, the text of Scripture has the right to establish both the substance and the structure of the sermon. Genuine exposition takes place when the preacher sets forth the meaning and message of the biblical text and *makes clear* how the Word of God establishes the identity and worldview of the church as the people of God.⁷

Vines and Shaddix’s “oral communication” is better understood using this dissertation’s linguistic explanation of the preaching event,

The *oral communication* of biblical truth by the Holy Spirit through a human personality to a given audience with the intent of enabling a positive response.⁸

Kuruvilla’s definition can benefit by expanding the understanding of “communication,”

Preaching is not only the interpretation of an authoritative biblical text but also the relevant *communication* of a God-given message to real people living real lives with a real need for that message.⁹

⁶Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 31.

⁷Albert Mohler Jr., *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 65.

⁸Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 27.

⁹Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text*, 20.

Furthermore, this dissertation's deepens Heisler's Spirit-driven definition by showing how the Spirit accomplishes His tasks linguistically:

Expository preaching is the Spirit-empowered *proclamation* of biblical truth derived from the illuminating guidance of the Holy Spirit by means of a verse-by-verse *exposition* of the Spirit-inspired text, with a view to *applying* the text by means of the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, first to the preacher's own heart, and then to the hearts of those who hear, culminating in an authentic and powerful witness to the living Word, Jesus Christ, and obedient, Spirit-filled living.¹⁰

The goals of this dissertation have been three-fold: establish what biblical preaching is in chapter 1 and 2, introduce SAT's concepts and vocabulary in chapter three, and use SAT's three acts (locution, illocution, perlocution) to explain and express the theology of preaching in chapters four to six. The dissertation has demonstrated that SAT can explain and express preaching's theological convictions since it has accomplished these goals. A modification to Searle's speech act equation, $F(p)$, that includes perlocutionary effects, $SA = \text{Force (Proposition)} > \text{Perlocutionary effects}$, can be used to summarize the communication of preaching: $\text{Preaching} = \text{Spirit-filled Force (theocentric propositions)} > \text{Spiritual Transformation}$.¹¹ Biblical preaching is linguistically explained as the Holy Spirit empowering and compelling the preacher to utter theocentric locutions in Spirit-filled illocutionary acts for perlocutionary effects of transformation.

¹⁰Greg Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2007), 21.

¹¹John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 1969), 39.

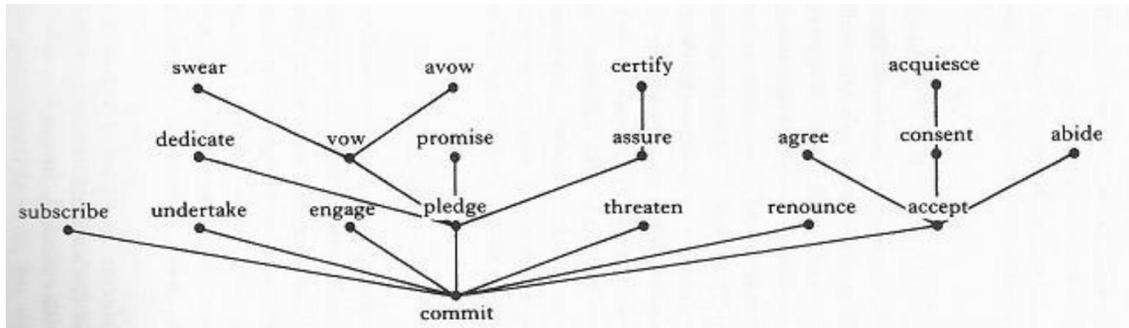


Figure A3. Commissive verb chart

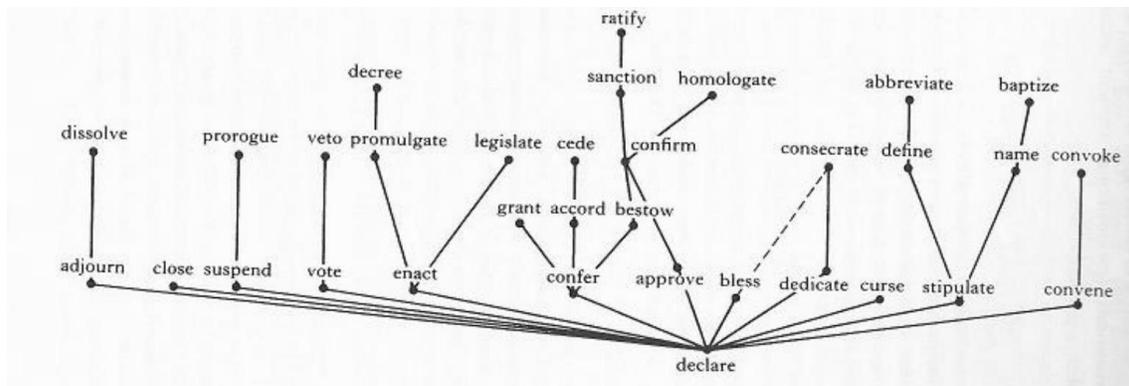


Figure A4. Declarative verb chart

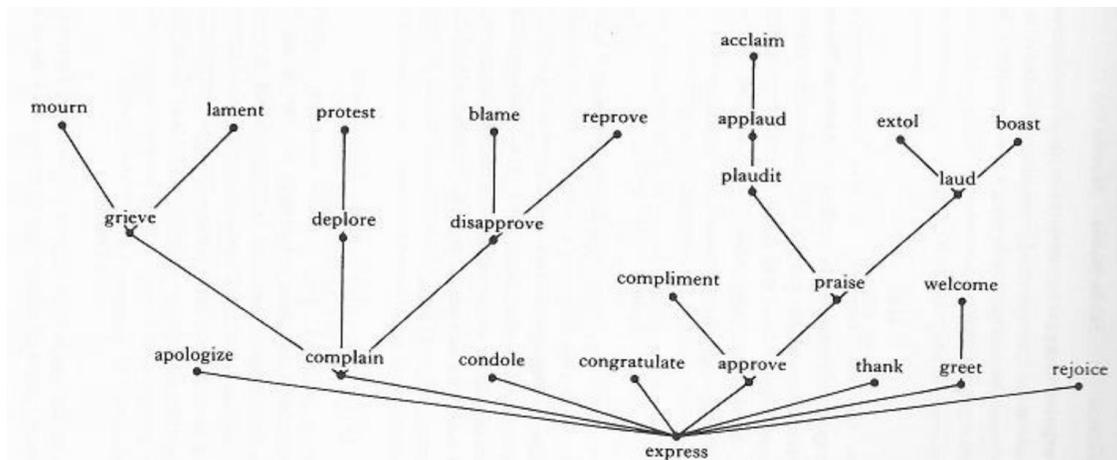


Figure A5. Expressive verb chart

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ABSTRACT

SPEECH ACT THEORY AND THE THEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS OF PREACHING

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This dissertation explains and expresses biblical preaching's theological convictions, specifically the preaching event, using the linguistic theory, Speech Act Theory (SAT). Chapter 1 introduces and supports preaching as a priority of Christianity by providing theological convictions about the theological conversation between the preacher, Holy Spirit, the Bible, and the hearer. The chapter concludes by stating the dissertation's thesis and the contributions a linguistic explanation provides for understanding preaching. Chapter 2 provides a brief theology of preaching and the four parties included in the preaching event. Chapter 3 focuses on introducing the reader to SAT by establishing the principle concepts and vocabulary of the theory.

Chapter 4 explicitly examines the locutionary act and its relationship with preaching. The chapter demonstrates preaching's locutionary acts are Spirit-compelled and empowered utterances of theocentric content. Chapter 5 explains that preaching's illocutionary acts are Spirit-filled actions of declaring Jesus and calling for repentance and faith. Chapter 6 shows that preaching utilizes oral communication's perlocutionary acts to accomplish the applicational aim of transformation. The final chapter summarizes the main points of the dissertation. It provides a linguistic understanding of biblical preaching—the Holy Spirit empowering and compelling the preacher to utter theocentric locutions in Spirit-filled illocutionary acts for perlocutionary transformation.

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