

Sermon Title: The Exposition of Scripture, Part 1

Sermon Text: Nehemiah 8:1-12

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to an understanding of the principles of Expository Preaching.

Sermon Proposition: There are 3 criteria for effective biblical communication of God's Word.

Introduction: The Exiles Return

After the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians about 586 B.C., the leading citizens of Judah were carried away as captives and resettled in the pagan city of Babylon. When the Babylonians were overthrown by the Persians about seventy years later, the stage was set for God's people to return to their beloved homeland.

There were actually three separate groups of Jewish citizens who made the return from Babylon and Persia to Jerusalem. Each of these groups had a specific task to accomplish.

1. The first group under Zerubbabel returned about 525 B.C. to rebuild the temple. Completed about 515 B.C., the temple was dedicated with great celebration and rejoicing by the Jewish people (Ezra 6:15-22).
2. The second group of Jewish exiles, under the leadership of Ezra the priest, returned to Jerusalem about 458 B.C. Ezra's task was to reestablish the Law as the basis of Jewish life. In a special assembly in the city of Jerusalem, Ezra read from the Law and challenged the people to follow the Lord's teachings (Nehemiah 8:1-12)
3. The third group under Nehemiah returned about 444 B.C. Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. In spite of opposition from their enemies, Nehemiah rallied and encouraged the people so effectively that the entire project was completed in fifty-two days (Nehemiah 6:15).

Three prophets of the Old Testament – Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi – lived and ministered in Jerusalem during this time known as the postexilic period. Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people to complete the task of building the temple, while Malachi rebuked the returned captives for their sin, idolatry, and shallow worship practices.

I. The preparation for exposition of the Scriptures. V.1

II. The presentation for exposition of the Scriptures. Vv.2-9

III. The produce from exposition of the Scriptures. Vv.10-12

I. The preparation for exposition of the Scriptures. V.1

- A. The Expositor prepares according to the Scriptures to show himself approved. **Ezra 7:10a**
The idea here is that the man chosen by God to be His herald has "set his mind" on the Scriptures for his preparation.

John Stott: Exposition refers to the content of the sermon (biblical truth) rather than its style (a running commentary). To expound Scripture is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view. The expositor opens what appears to be closed, makes plain what is obscure, unravels what is knotted, and unfolds what is tightly packed. [Between Two Worlds, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/what-is-expository-preaching/>]

Haddon Robinson: 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 hearers. [Biblical Preaching (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/what-is-expository-preaching/>)]

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire and that the chief end of preaching is to give men and women a sense of God and his presence. [Preaching and Preachers (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/what-is-expository-preaching/>)]

David Helm: Expository preaching is empowered preaching that rightfully submits the shape and emphasis of the sermon to the shape and emphasis of a biblical text. [Expository Preaching (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/what-is-expository-preaching/>)]

1. The herald makes the Scriptures and the fulfilling of his calling his chief **design** and **business**. **Ezra 7:9-10a**
 2. The herald prepares to show himself **approved** by God. **2 Timothy 2:15**
 The messenger neglects everything to study (spoudazo) the Word of God. His goal is to “rightly divide” the Word of God. The Greek “Orthofemeo” according to vines notes, the word is from “orthos,” “straight,” and “temno,” “to cut,” the meaning passed from the idea of cutting or dividing, to the more general sense of rightly dealing with a thing. “It’s about teaching Scripture accurately.” [Expositional Dictionary, vol. 1, p.327]
2 Timothy 4:9 Be diligent to come to me quickly;
 The Scriptures according to Romans 15:4 are for our learning, therefore correct interpretation is not optional.
 “In Ezra’s day, the Torah or law had become the focal point of national identity, so a scribe – the expert interpreter of the law – came to designate the community’s primary spiritual leader.”
 [Lasor, Hubbard, Bush: “Old Testament Survey” The Message, Form and Background of the Old Testament: Second Edition, Erdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K., p.562]
1 Timothy 3:15-16 but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. **16** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.
 3. The herald **internalizes** during his preparation.
Ezekiel 3:1-3 Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." **2** So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. **3** And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.
- B. The Expositor **studies** the Scriptures to show himself approved. V.7:10b
1. The Expositor prepares himself to **seek** the Word of God.
 This meant to study the Scriptures in order to determine the meaning of the Scriptures and the implication of obeying or disobeying the Scripture in daily life. The preacher or herald is prepared because he has “set his mind and affections, to make the chief design and business” to know and understand the Scriptures, God, Jesus Christ, and sound doctrine.
 2. The Expositor studies by seeking the Word of God, in order to search and find out the true sense and meaning of it, and therefore to learn what sins and errors were to be reformed, and what duties were to be performed. Also in his preparation he should have learned how to do this.
- C. The Expositor **lives** the Scriptures to show himself approved. **Ezra 7:10c**
1. The Expositor **lives** the Scriptures before he **speaks** the Scriptures. **Ezra 7:10c**
 2. The Expositor is an **example** of living for the flock. 1 Timothy 4:6, 11-16;
Philippians 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.
 3. The Expositor is able to live the Scriptures because he is **sent**. **Romans 10:15**
 4. The Expositor is to live the **truth** of Scripture while in the flesh.
1 Timothy 2:7 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle-- I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying-- a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.
Deuteronomy 16:12 "And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.
Matthew 5:19 "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

D. The Expositor teaches the Scripture to show himself approved. **Ezra 7:10d**

1. The Expositor teaches the Word of God. **Ezra 7:10d**

2. The Expositor teaches with expert skill.

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;

3. The Expositor teaches the word committed to him by God.

Titus 1:10-11 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, **11** whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

4. The Expositor teaches truth and not falsehood.

Ezekiel 33:6-8 `But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.' **7** "So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. **8** "When I say to the wicked, `O wicked *man*, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

Conclusion: The word exposition is from the Latin, "expositio," meaning "a setting forth, narration, or display." As applied to preaching, the word has come to mean the setting forth or explanation of the message of the biblical text. In expository preaching the expositor's sermon is designed to communicate what the text says, including its meaning and implications for the contemporary audience.