

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING TO THE  
CONTEMPORARY CHURCHES IN NIGERIA

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2014-0092

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Theology  
Faculty of Theological Studies,  
The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso  
In partial fulfillment of the award of the Degree of Master of Divinity in Theology

JUNE 2014

## ABSTRACT

The dearth of expository style of preaching in some quarters of our local churches today calls for serious concern. The common scenario now is preaching from personal experiences, happenings in the society or at best textual or topical preaching. Biblical exposition which involves digging deep into the word in order to properly exegete it appears to be fading away. This study on "The significance of expository preaching to the contemporary churches in Nigeria" sought to find out the reasons for this dearth and the relevance of this style of preaching in growing the church spiritually and numerically. To achieve this, this researcher embarked on a library based research work using tools like books, journals, papers and other text materials sourced from the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso library and relevant internet materials to complement the library sources so as to validate the study. This study reveals that expository preaching style is a veritable and indispensable tool for envisioning the church with the benefit of hindsight. It impacts the church and gives light that leads to the spiritual, physical and physiological transformation of the audience. The way out of this current dearth as this study revealed is a return to true biblical expository preaching which carries a force of divine authority and a reformation of the pulpit. This is essential because this style of preaching remains the channel through which God encounters men and women in order to bring them salvation and, the richness and ripeness of Christian character. This study recommended that contemporary pastors and gospel ministers should be committed to biblical exposition, pursue personal development, plan and prepare their sermons ahead of time, be focused and acquire all necessary skills that will enhance their proper exposition of God's words for the spiritual edification of the church.

## 5.1 CONCLUSION

Based on this researcher's findings on the significance of preaching to the contemporary Church ministry via his library research work, he wishes to affirm that expository preaching is serious business that must not be handled with levity. Some Pastors have given up on expository preaching and turn to counseling but it cannot replace sound expository preaching. Based on this premise, he loves to submit that expository preaching is the key and secret to envisioning the Church with the benefit of hindsight. Without sound exposition of the word, the pulpit ministry will continue to experience the onslaught of spiritual and psychological problems.

For expository preaching to impact the Church and give insight that will lead to the spiritual, physical and physiological transformation of the audience, it must be:

(a) Bible Based: This means that the preacher must stay with the word, particularly the text he is exposing, study it through and draw out relevant lessons for

onward application for the listeners good. The preacher must avoid all forms of references that will distract him from focusing on the inherent truth in the word.

(b) Holy Spirit Inspired and Empowered: The biblical exposition must be inspired and delivered in the power of the Holy Spirit. Not until this is done, the eyes of men that have been blindfolded by the god of this world will not be open to see. This is in line with Handren's statement in his book; *Preach the Word* that the preacher must seek the presence of the Holy Spirit through prayer (129).

(c) Exemplary: This means that the preacher must first applied the truth being exposed to him by the Holy Spirit to his life first before passing it on to others. This is in line with William Evans thoughts that the biblical expositor must remember that where the application begins, the sermon begins. He must therefore not fail to apply the truth taught (97).

(d) Contextualized: Revelation is useless when it cannot be made relevant and applicable to the particular situation of the hearer irrespective of his tribe or culture. The biblical expositor must ensure that he constantly relate his messages to the immediate needs of his parishioners so that they can profit from his preaching.

(e) Passionate and Positive: Fred Craddock observed that "how one preaches is to a large extent what one preaches (52). The goal of every biblical exposition is to illuminate the hearers and ensure positive transformation. That means that the speaker who is the agent of this task must be compassionate and positive in his delivery. Handren is correct when he said that the preacher must develop genuine love for the people (129).

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATION

For the dearth of God's word experienced on our pulpit today to end and revival ensured through sound biblical expository preaching, this researcher wishes to make the following recommendations for contemporary pastors that will make their

sermons achieve the goal of envisioning the Church and ensure genuine transformation in the lives of the present day parishioners based on his findings so far.

1. **Personal Development:** The contemporary preachers must ensure that they develop themselves spiritually, physically and academically. This is very important because one cannot give what one doesn't have. If the preacher is weak spiritually, the pulpit will be weak. If the preacher is a nonentity and lacks the basic knowledge of what he is to expound and teach, he will not be an effective preacher. He should read wide so as to be more informed and enlightened.

2. **Planning and Preparation:** For the biblical expositor to effectively impact his audience, he needs to plan ahead. This researcher suggests that Pastors should plan and prepare their expository messages at least two months ahead before delivery. This will afford them the opportunity to study and make necessary research and consultations into the topics or books they wish to expound before delivery.

3. **Focus:** Today's Pastor who agree with this researcher that expository preaching is the key to illuminating the Church must be focused. This is because the act doesn't produce immediate results. It takes longer time before one begins to see changes in people's life. It is also possible that in the short run, responses in terms of attendance at services are low but with the power of focus there will be improvement.

4. **Skills Acquisition:** Language is a medium that can make accurate statements in spite of a lack of precision. It is the medium that can communicate with accuracy and express truth (Elliot 39). Without a good grasp of the biblical language, an expositor will not be able to communicate his messages effectively. Therefore, the preacher must commit himself to acquiring skills in his communication and also improve his knowledge of the original languages of the bible (Hebrew and Greek) so as to be a "master expositor." By his calling the pastor in a very real sense should be a teacher of teachers (Mullen 95)

5.       Discipleship: The Pastor should be conscious of discipling his members and leaders in this act of biblical exposition as they learn and hear him speak to them regularly. This will help to reduce the trend of failure on our pulpit and membership drift when a pastor changes pastorate.

          However, further research can be carried out on this work in the area of dangers and difficulties of expository preaching so as to unravel the challenges and problems that are inherent in this style of biblical preaching.