

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Why I Am Committed to Expository Preaching, Part 2

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: GTY127

Let's go back to our little list, if we can, and I'll try to move with a little more alacrity here.

Number eight on my list, a failure to do expository preaching depreciates by example the spiritual duty of personal Bible study. It depreciates by example the spiritual duty of personal Bible study.

Personal Bible study is the priority, is it not? "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Personal Bible study is essential to sanctification. "Sanctify them by Thy truth, Thy Word is truth," as we said last hour.

If it is not demonstrated from the pulpit that there is a serious commitment to regular and intense examination of Scripture, how do you convince the people in the pew that it's important? But if it's more important for you to be clever or insightful, or psychological or anything else, you cannot convey that to the people. People in our church, I'm sure people in this church, your churches take very seriously the Word of God in direct proportion to how you take it seriously. If you're in a church where assorted Bible verses from assorted translations are popped up on a screen in a Power Point presentation, that's the way your people will take the Bible...as a lot of selected, sort of malleable ideas that can be stated in any fashion and used as interjections into the otherwise clever insights. But if your people understand that you are first and foremost devoted to understanding the deep things of Scripture, then you convey that same thing to them as their priority.

To put it another way, people learn to study the Bible by observing how you study the Bible. If you use the Bible and you don't study the Bible, then they'll learn to use the Bible, find a verse here, or a verse there, and they will not study the Bible either.

Number nine, a failure to do expositional preaching prevents the preacher from being the voice of God on every issue of his time...it prevents the preacher from being the voice of God in every issue of his time. Jeremiah 8:9 says, "They have rejected the Word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have?"

Wherever you are, whenever you have an opportunity, you want to be the voice of God. I was...I don't know if any of you saw Headline News a couple of weeks ago, I was on there on a discussion with Mike Gallanos(?) out of Atlanta on yoga (Laughter). Did any of you see that? Yeah...well, you need to know a little bit about that. They called up and said, "Would you be willing to come on CNN's

Headline News and talk about yoga?" And I said, "Of course." I don't care what the subject is, I know what I want to say. (Laughter) I know where I'm going, you know, and I'm just...you've probably observed that when the guy...when Mike asked me a question, I said, "Well I don't know about that, but..." (Laughter) So the subject is immaterial because you just want to be the voice of God on every issue. But it was very interesting.

I was on with Doug Paget(?) who is an Emerging Church guy, one of the leaders of the Emerging Church, Solomon's Porch, in Minneapolis. And his...they asked, "Is there any conflict between Christian faith, Jesus, and yoga?" And he said, "No, there's no conflict between, you know, Christianity and Jesus and yoga because Christians," he said, "want to be whole persons, body, mind and spirit. And yoga makes a great contribution to that."

That is not being the voice of God on that issue. And so I don't know what I said, something like, "Getting yourself into some kind of weird physical position has no impact on your spiritual life whatsoever." (Laughter) I just...a few...if you want to relieve stress and be a whole person, and then I just launched into the gospel. You come to Christ, you repent of your sin, you embrace Jesus Christ and you obey the Word of God, you live out the principles of Scripture...and I always want to say the same thing...the Bible is the only authority, Jesus is the only Savior and you're saved by faith....and then I'm out. I don't care what the thing is. And in response to it, I think I said at the end, something like, "In Hinduism you empty your mind to find the God that is within you. In Christianity you fill your mind with divine truth and worship the God who is above you." And the two are not compatible. I even commented that what he said didn't even sound...it didn't sound Christian, isn't even Christianity.

But I...whether it's Larry King, or wherever it is, it's always very simple to me. What does God have to say that these people need to hear? You just want to be the voice of God on all issues and it doesn't matter what it is. I remember the first time I was ever on Larry King, the first question out of his mouth the first time I was on, I was on with Bruce Wilkerson and some other people, and he looked at me and he said, "What happened to that baby at the bottom of the tower? What happened to that baby at the bottom of the tower?" He's very, very concerned about the death of children. And I said, "Instant heaven." And he just kind of...it took him back...Instant heaven. I said that little one went into the presence of the Lord, that's what I believe the Bible teaches.

So you're going to be living in situations where you need to be able to give an answer for the hope that is within you to any man who asks, right? And so if you're not engaged in the deep things of Scripture as a regular process of life...it's one of the reasons I tell guys to preach Sunday morning and Sunday night two different sermons all your life because you're just going to accumulate more understanding of Scripture. If you can't do that, then you're unable to become the voice of God on every issue in your time.

Number ten, failure to do expositional preaching breeds a congregation that is weak and indifferent to the glory of God and Christ. A failure to preach Scripture redirects people from a God-centered perspective to a man-centered perspective. It tends to undermine confidence, of course, in Scripture. There's a certain indifference toward Scripture conveyed by the failure to teach it, but it produces a congregation that is indifferent to the glory of God and Christ because the purpose of Scripture is to enable people to glorify God and Christ. It's amazing how low people's view of God is in those environments, a low view of Christ rather than, as we said earlier, a great lofty transcendent view.

Number eleven, a failure to do Bible exposition robs people of their only true source of help. It robs people of their only true source of help, the Scripture. It is true, is it not?, that the only source of spiritual help is the Word of God, or the application of the Word of God, the proclamation of the Word of God which leads to the understanding of the Word of God. That's the only true way to help.

Years ago when psychology came in like a flood, I was preaching and writing about the fact that psychology makes no contribution to anything spiritual. It might make you feel better about struggles in life, but it makes no spiritual impact at all. That's a work of the Word and the Spirit. So anything other than the Scripture robs people of their only true source of help.

After the interview the other night with Doug Paget, he podcasts. And he has this thing, cause Phil Johnson gave it to me on a CD to listen to him where he just keeps talking all the time on a podcast. I guess the assumption is someone wants to listen. I can't imagine, you know, just this rambling thing. And so, he came on, he was still in the studio there in Minneapolis, we were remotes and he was still in the studio and he was talking to the woman who escorted him in and miked him up and set him up in the camera and all this, and he was saying things like, "What kind of a guy is that?" Speaking of me. "What kind of person thinks you can remove stress and the issues of life by reading the Bible?" That's what he said on his podcast. "What kind of person is that?"

So, what kind of person is it who thinks you can help people without the Bible? A person who doesn't believe in the authority of Scripture. It's a non-Christian approach.

Number twelve, is that right? This builds on what I just said, this failure to do biblical exposition produces an attitude of indifference toward divine authority...that produces an attitude of indifference toward divine authority. Try the slave sermon on a crowd in the Emerging Church, see how that flies. Or the Seeker Church where they've all come because the church is going to fulfill their dreams and desires. There is a real indifference in those environments to divine authority. There's an indifference at the top and there's an indifference all the way down.

Let me stretch this point into a thirteenth point that is related to that...a failure to exposit the scriptures lies to people about what they really need...it lies to people about what they really need. It is...isn't it Jeremiah 8:11? Treating people's wounds superficially? They think they're getting spiritual help and

they're not...and they're not.

Fourteen, and this grows right out of it, it strips the pulpit of power...it strips the pulpit of power. "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God." Are you a little familiar with Hebrews 4:12? "For the Word of God is alive, powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword," do you believe that? Look, we are desperate men. We get into that pulpit...that is a desperate place...nobody knows what this is like. Do you know that there's no parallel to this in the world. Nobody does this. One of the great orators of England said his most paralyzing thought was he would have to speak three times to the same people. I speak three times every week to the same people. This is a bizarre function, really. People come and sit and let you speak to them week after week, year after year...think about Grace Church, I'm almost 40 years there, that's like a life sentence. I mean, come on, mercy, give us somebody else. Who does that? Who keeps coming back and back and back and back and back?

I'll tell you why, as long as you're preaching the Word of God, you disappear. You're gone and the people are under the authority of the Word of God. And they want to be wounded and they don't want to be wounded superficially. They want to be cut deep. When you don't exposit the Word, you strip the pulpit of its power.

And if you think about it in the terms of 2 Corinthians 10, you might look at that for a minute. It's probably a good illustration, 2 Corinthians 10, the principle here is good. In verse 3 he says, "We walk in the flesh." He's not saying, "I'm carnal," he's saying, "I'm human," here. There's a little play on words in this section because he used it in a different way at the end of verse 2. But here he's saying, "I'm human but I don't engage in spiritual war with human weapons." Verse 4, "The weapons of our warfare are not human, but divinely powerful, or mighty unto God."

Why? Why do you need powerful weapons? Because, he says in verse 4, "You're attempting to destroy fortresses." The imagery here is not that you're shooting a paper tiger here. You're not trying to knock down a tent. You are assaulting a massive fortification and you cannot do it with superficial weapons. You can't...you can't shoot rubber bands at a fortress. The word "fortress" here is the word for fortress, it's also the word for prison, anything that was massive stone. We are assaulting massive fortifications.

What's he talking about? That's a metaphor for something but for what explains it in the next statement. He says, "The destruction of fortresses," verse 4, look at verse 5, "we are destroying speculations, or *logismos*, ideologies." The fortresses are ideas, religious, psychological, philosophical, theoretical, intuitive, spiritual idea. This is what preaching does. This is what spiritual warfare is. Spiritual warfare is not chasing demons. Spiritual warfare is assaulting erroneous ideas. It is after the mind. That's what it's after. Not the emotions, the emotions will follow, but we assault the mind. We're trying to destroy the ideologies, the fortifications of ideas that people have built up and

they've become incarcerated in them, they become their prisons and they become their tombs. And in order to bring down these *logismos* which he further defines, look at it, we're destroying speculations, *ki* (?) could be even which is a further definition, these speculations are high thing raised up against the knowledge of God. Any ungodly idea is a fortress to be assaulted.

Now you tell me what is the one weapon against error? Truth. We're not trying to tweak people's emotion, we're not trying to manipulate them by singing all kinds of music and songs and even invitation songs that sort of soothe them into some emotional response. We are trying to bring the truth of God to bear hard against wrong ideas, wrong thinking, damning thinking. The power is in the truth with a view, at the end of verse 5, to change their thinking so every thought they have is obedient to whom? To Christ. That's it. We're after how people think and the power is always in the Word because the truth is in the Word.

Number fifteen, a failure to do expository preaching assumes that the preacher can change people by his ability. I don't believe that. I would probably guess that if you asked any preacher if he thought he had the ability to change people, if he was anything other than a rabid Arminian, he would probably deny that. But in a fact, don't tell me what you believe, show me by what you do when you get in the pulpit.

Number sixteen, and this I think is just an interesting concept. A failure to do expository preaching reduces the preacher's words to the level of everyone else's word. You've just...you've just engaged your people at the same level that all the people are...that all the pundits and all the theorists, and all the philosophers and all the religious people have engaged them. You've just lowered yourself to the common level.

Look, if you're not saying, "God has said..." then it's all the same to people. It's just your ideas. And they'll...the crowd will follow whoever says what they want to hear.. So when you don't exposit the Word of God, you reduce your own words, void of Scripture, to the level of everyone else's words.

Number seventeen, failure to do expository preaching portrays an attitude of self-love rather than loving the Lord with all your heart, mind and soul. Failure to exposit the Scripture means you don't love God with all your heart, soul, mind. Another way to say it, whatever you love most will dominate what you say, or whoever you love the most.

Number eighteen, it creates a destructive disconnect between doctrine and life...it creates a destructive disconnect between doctrine and life. Life imitates theology, right? "As a man thinks in his heart, so he is." Life imitates theology. You live your theology. Everybody does. The most dominating thing in your life, the strongest, most powerful motivation in your life is what you believe about God. You give people superficial ideas about God, they are superficially motivated. So you create a destructive disconnect between sound doctrine and life. Life always imitates theology. That's why you

can't just evangelize people all the time and say, "I preach the gospel..I preach the gospel...I preach the gospel." Because if that's all they know, and they ever get to the deep things of sanctification they're just going to be endlessly superficial because they can't live out what they don't really believe to be true as to the nature and will and purpose of God.

Number nineteen, a failure to do expositional preaching denigrates the person of God by omitting those attributes and truths of his revelation that trouble and terrify the unregenerate. How would you define the Seeker Movement, the Emerging Church Movement that seeks to be inoffensive, right? You're not going to go to the Seeker Church and hear a message on the wrath of God. You're not going to go and hear a message on divine vengeance. You're not going to go and hear a message on hell. Probably not going to hear a message on sin because this troubles people and the whole idea is to make church the place where all your trouble goes away. But biblical preaching is troubling, it is always troubling. It troubles the most sanctified soul. It ought to trouble the preacher. It ought to terrify the preacher. And you denigrate the full glory of God by omitting those attributes and those truths of His revelation that trouble and terrify sinners...this editing, or as Carson called it, this gagging of Godis pride really at an incomprehensible level?

I remember one time at a conference, a Ligonier Conference, I said, "You know, there's two things I don't want to do, seriously don't want to do. One is, I don't want to say 'God said' when He didn't say. Nor do I want to say, 'God said, but I'm not telling anybody.'" If it's here, it has to be proclaimed. We can't gag God, we can't edit God, we can't domesticate God, we can't turn Him into a nice guy so the church becomes really a nice place where sinners feel really comfortable. Sure there's grace, there's compassion, there's tenderness, there's love, warm heartedness, all those things, but we let God be God in the fullness of His person and trouble and terrify sinners.

Number twenty, and this ties to what I said earlier. A failure to do expositional preaching reduces the preacher to the level of every rival teacher shorn(??) of authority. It leaves ministry success to be determined by who is most clever, who can get the biggest crowd.

Number twenty-one, and this again...they're all interwoven...failure to do expositional preaching emasculates the dominion of the pulpit over people's minds and souls. I don't want to get too carried away about this, but there is a certain dominion in the pulpit, there's a certain regency in the pulpit. There's a regal nature and I mean that in the sense of kingly authority because the King is speaking through the servant. That's why the New Testament uses the word "herald...herald." That's a great word. A herald came into town in a day when they had no newspapers and no media and the herald came to the city square and read the message from the monarch and it came with full unilateral kingly authority.

Number twenty-two, a failure to do expository preaching disconnects people from the legacy of the past from the history of the church. If I ask you guys, when you think about the past, I am sure that

you love to read guys that are long dead, right? You love it. You embrace it. It thrills you. In fact, if you're like me, I'd rather read dead people than any living people. There are a few living writers that capture me but many more dead writers who thought deeply about Scripture, Reformers and Puritans, etc.

But if you had no interest in the deep things of Scripture, you have absolutely no connection to those people and so you disconnect yourself from the great legacy of the past, the history of the church, the doctrines, the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit on those great men of the past. They have been...they have been defended and celebrated by generations and generations and generations of believers and it seems to me that all perhaps to be lost in this generation. And the badge of these new churches is that they have no connection to the past. They pay no attention to the past, they think that's their badge of nobility. That's, by the way, the Emerging Church is all about. It's not about anything constructive, it's a deconstructive movement, it's all deconstruction. All they want to do is destroy the past. They don't want to put anything in its place. They aren't known by what they affirm, they're only known by the questions they ask. They ask endless deconstructing destructive questions, questioning the validity of everything. And you do that to an already self-absorbed, self-centered, post-modern world where people think their own ideas reign supreme and it's a perfect fit. Redefining the church as this flexible, culturally defined group of people with no real connection to the past. In fact, the past is all vilified because all these emerging guys at the core, the leaders of that Movement are all angry because they were raised, all of them, in a fundamentalist deal they didn't buy into. They saw this legalism and they kicked it all over and this is where they've gone, like kids writing bad words on a barn and running.

Okay, number twenty-three, and these are obvious...a failure to do expositional preaching removes protection from error and carnality so dangerous to the church. This is unfaithful shepherding. You know, there's a statement that Paul makes in 2 Corinthians, if you haven't studied 2 Corinthians, it's...it would be such a wonderful thing to study...go over to chapter 11 of 2 Corinthians for a minute. And I know I'm being a little bit selective as these things come to mind, that's cause they're not in my notes, but as I think about them... Paul is talking here, and you're very familiar with the text about how much he suffered physically but then he comes down to verse 28 and he says, "Apart from such external things or above," that is more painful, that's the indication, "Beyond the external things in terms of soul agony, there's the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches." I've heard people say that was his administrative burden. That was not his administrative burden. He wasn't a paper pusher, didn't sit behind a desk, he's not talking about that. He's talking about this tremendous pressure placed upon him because in his heart he had such a serious concern for the churches, and here's how he defines it. Verse 29, "Who is weak without my being weak?" Are you that kind of pastor, am I that kind of pastor? Do I feel the pain when one in my congregation falls into sin?

That's what he's saying. That's what he's saying.

Then he goes on to say, "Who is led into sin without my intense concern?" That is a shepherd. That is a shepherd. It isn't just about teaching and preaching the Word, it's about feeling the agonies of sinning sheep. And so what are you going to do? You're going to try to minimize your own pain, aren't you? How you going to do that? Do everything in your power to insulate them from sin. How do you do that? Well it's back to what David said, "I've hid Your Word in my heart that I might not sin." You...You...You...the dominating influence of the Word of God and the power of the Spirit redirects the sinner. So if you feel the pain, it's like Jesus, you know, who when He cleanses the temple and "Zeal for your house has eaten Me up. The reproaches that fall on you, fall on Me." I feel your pain when you're dishonored.

If you feel the pain when God is dishonored and if you feel the pain when you're people sin, then you're going to do everything you can to lead them down the path where that's not going to happen. And there's only one place you're going to go, you're going to be the kind of shepherd who leads them into the green pastures. This is faithful shepherding. I'm just afraid there's not a lot of interest in deep soul work. Conviction, penitence, fear of God.

Number twenty-four, and we aren't going to get through all of these, so you can relax. But that's okay, they get a little redundant after a while. Number twenty-four, this...I'm living in this zone right now. Failure to do expositional preaching abandons the duty to guard the truth...to guard the truth.

I talked to a pastor not long ago who said to me, "I love your ministry and I love the ministry of So-and-so." And I just went....what? In my mind, "You kidding me?" Either he's not listening to me very well or he's not listening to him very well because we are nowhere in the same zone. I couldn't believe it. You know, the whole church is just...just perishing for lack of discernment. People ask me, "What's the biggest problem in the church?" Lack of discernment. You know, it's spiritual AIDS. AIDS is a deficient immune system, Acquired Immune Deficiency System. So if you have a deficient immune system...people who have a deficient immune system who have AIDS can die of a thousand diseases. And people have a deficient discernment system can die of a thousand heresies. I said to a publisher one time, a publisher at Thomas Nelson, does my books, "So why in the world would you publish a book by Benny Hinn that has nine members in the Trinity?" He said, "What do you mean? We publish all Christian literature." That's not Christian literature. That's like...whisst....does not compute.

You know, it's just...it's just a heartache, there's so many people pumping out so much untruth, half truth which is probably more dangerous than blatant heresy. And there's just no real commitment to guard the truth. Now I wrote *The Truth War*, did anybody see that book? You know, the publisher said, "Oh man, that's way too strong. Got to soften it." I said, "I'm not softening that at all, I can't do that. I can't do that." So they decided not to try to beat me, they decided to join me and they made a cover with a snake on it. That was their idea. They said if we can't beat them, we'll join them, you

know, and we'll give them more of the same deal. But it is a truth war. I don't think people understand that this is a war. We're not just floating down the stream here. You know, earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and you know what will happen?

Listen, the Emerging...when I wrote the book *The Truth War*, I knew what the response would be. There goes MacArthur again, he's caustic, he's critical, he's judgmental, he's intolerant. All that and the response of some of them has been, "If he really cared about us, he would join the conversation and learn from us together." So, I'm preparing a second book now and I started it and it's going to be a book on the subject, "How did Jesus Deal With Those Who Misrepresented the Truth?" Conversation or condemnation. I just want to do what Jesus did, that's all I want to do. I just want to follow Him.

Let me just give you a little picture of that. It's Wednesday, Passion Week, I believe Monday He came into town, Tuesday He cleansed the temple. Wednesday spent all day teaching in the temple and being confronted by Sadducees, Pharisees, Herodians and various assorted groups trying to publicly discredit Him so they'd have a case against Him for the Romans to bring Him to execution. They never got anything and so they finally lied about Him. But it's Wednesday, Jesus has watched the religious leadership of Israel assault Him now for most of His ministry. They have come to the conclusion that He does what He does by the power of the devil and they despise Him. They are false, that's why when He came in on Passion Week after being hailed as the Messiah on Monday, He cleansed the temple on Tuesday...which infuriated them. He was basically saying, "This is a corrupt system, right?" My father's house has become a cave of robbers. This is an all out, full-head-on assault against an evil system. And these are Jews, monotheistic Jews worshiping the God who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And Jesus says it's a false system.

And I think it's so fascinating on Wednesday night, He gives the final speech and the final speech is Matthew 23 where He just blasts the Pharisees and the scribes with a diatribe that has no equal in Scripture. And He does it to the whole crowd. "Woe, woe, woe, hypocrites, hypocrites, snakes, murderers." So, conversation or condemnation. How hard is that?

Let me give you a little insight, think about this. In Luke's version of that, which I was just preaching lately, Luke says He says, "Beware of the scribes, not all Pharisees are scribes, all scribes are Pharisees." So it encompasses their system. "Beware of the scribes, beware of them." After having blistered them, you have to compare Luke 21, Mark 13 and Matthew 23 the more full. Matthew gives you the more full account of that speech as well as the more full account of the Olivet Discourse after He left the city that same evening on the slope of the Mount of Olives. But He just blisters them and then He says to the people, He speaks directly to them, "Woe, woe, woe to you," and then He speaks to the people and says, "Beware, beware, beware, beware." They...He says, I love this one line, one specific thing He says, He talks about their pretense of long prayers and their hypocrisy and all that, then He says, "They devour widows houses." That's the...you can't get lower than that...to take

advantage of widows and they're supposed to represent God? And they knew what God said in the Old Testament about widows and orphans, right? James reiterates it, "Pure religion, undefiled, take care of the widows and orphans." Just to give you something to think about. So His last speech is, "Beware of them, they devour widows' houses." There is some great history on this on what they did. Scribes were basically the lawyers of the culture. And as lawyers in that culture, they had responsibility for all legal matters, not just religious matters, but all legal matters, states, all that. They had so many schemes to divest widows of their money.

I found at least twelve ways they did it. And the final way was they took their homes as collateral against the widow's inability to pay and then confiscated the house and then dispossessed the widow. They were really evil. They devour widows' houses.

Jesus has cleansed the temple. He has said it is a cave of robbers. It is a false religious system and these people are devouring widows' houses. Then in the sequence, He's done with that speech, He's exhausted, it's been a long wearying day of interactions and teaching. He sits down in the Court of the Women, opposite the Treasury and it says, "He looked up," which meant that He was looking down, that's an exegetical key there, you can't look up unless you were looking down..." So He looks up and He sees people coming by and putting their money in the system, just dumping their money in the receptacles that they had set up in that corrupt thing and He sees a widow come by and she puts two coins in, the only two she had, to go home and die. And He turns to His disciples and says, "This temple is coming down, not one stone upon another."

And the point is this, any system that devours widows and takes their last two cents is corrupt, is coming down. I don't know how you've

interpreted the widow's mite. There is no principle of giving there. If there is, give a hundred percent, go home and die, and I don't think the Bible teaches that. You say, "Well it's her attitude." It doesn't say anything about her attitude. It says, "This system cost her everything, trying to buy her way into favor with God." Legalism. And He said, "It's coming...this whole thing is coming down, not one stone will be upon another. And the desolation that comes on this place will last until they look to the one who is their Lord and Messiah and say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

The desolation is still going on today, folks. And I think that last little moment when He saw that system eating the very last two pennies of that widow, He said, "That's it." So I say to you, "Woe to you prosperity preachers who take the widow's money to buy your ten-thousand-dollar a night hotel room and your hundred-thousand dollar a month jet. Jesus feels about your system just like He felt about that.

So how did He confront the enemies of the truth? Let's talk about...you must have some great spiritual insights that I can learn from. You understand, I'm a dinosaur saying this kind of stuff. I get

myself in trouble constantly. I got in trouble, big trouble with *The Truth War* book, this is going to be even worse trouble with that crowd, but we've got to do what we've got to do, right? So...

Let's see, where was I? Oh, I could say so much more about that point. That's what we always say when we've just run out of material. (Laughter) "Brethren, I could go on and on," you haven't got another thought, another note, you've got nothing, you know. All right. Let me just jump to something here, number whatever...twenty-five.

Failure to teach expositionally...cause this connects with this...fails to defend threatened truths...fails to defend threatened truths. Could you come up with a list of what truths are threatened today? A lot of them. And you've got preachers who never ever rise to the defense of those truths. They just roll over, just say, "Hey, if you don't want to make a fuss, you want to be warm and fuzzy. You know, I'm just driven by the truth. I'm not a civilian, I'm not a civilian, I'm a soldier and this is a war and I'm defending my...I've got my little puny popgun and I'm just firing it as much as I can. I don't know if anybody's dropping anywhere, but I'm firing into the air. I'm a soldier. This is a war. We're good soldiers, 2 Timothy, enduring hardness. We already gave up civilian life. The metaphor of a soldier is pretty clear, isn't it?, in 2 Timothy 2.

I love how John starts his two little epistles, look at 2 John and I think this is kind of the wrap up on the New Testament, obviously on the epistles before you jump to the future in the apocalypse. And what is the last message of the New Testament, prior to the future? Second John, look at this, "The elder to the chosen lady," some woman that he knew with...a real woman with real children, "whom I love in truth and not only I but also all who know the truth for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever, grace, mercy and peace be with us from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love, I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth just as we received commandment to do from the Father."

What word appears five times? Truth, truth, truth, truth, truth...it's always about the truth...always...always. Why? Verse 7, "Because many...what?...deceivers have gone out into the world." This is a battle. And if any deceiver shows up and brings this teaching...verse 10...don't let him in your house, don't give him the greeting, don't have a conversation. If you do, you're a partaker in his evil deeds. Tony Compollo has written this thing, he's in the Emerging Church, you know the name, and he says that Muslims aren't the only people going to heaven, Muslims aren't the only people going to heaven. Some Christians are too.

If anybody comes along and denies the deity of Jesus Christ, he's a heretic and he has to be exposed as a heretic. You don't have a conversation with him and affirm his spirituality. Anyway, you know that, why am I saying it? Taking ice to Eskimos here.

Third John, it just feels good, doesn't it? To feel good about what you feel good about. Third John, look at the same thing, "The elder to the beloved Gaius." One letter to a lady, one letter to a man. "Whom I love in truth." Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper, be in good health as your soul prospers, I was glad when brethren came and bore witness to your truth," that is how you're walking in truth. "I have no greater joy than this, to hear my children walking in the truth." It's always about the truth, isn't it? The truth has to be defended. Heresy has to be exposed.

Well, I can skip over some of these because I think I emphasized them enough. Now let's see. Let me hit this point. A failure to do expositional preaching denies defacto all spiritual blessings from one's relationship to the Lord. It denies de facto that all spiritual blessings flow from one's relationship to the Lord. Is that a true statement? Do all spiritual blessings flow from our relationship to the Lord? Are we blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus? Anthropocentric emphasis rather than Christocentric emphasis denies that all spiritual blessings flow from our relationship with the Lord. All issues in life are resolved in Christ, is that true? All issues in life are resolved in our relationship to Christ which is defined, enriched, enhanced and built through obedience to the Word of God. All Christian life, all things that pertain to life and godliness, all purpose, all meaning, all answers, all resolutions, all dispositions, everything is found in our relationship to Christ. And our relationship to Christ develops along the line of understanding, loving, embracing, obeying truth.

Another point, a failure to do Bible exposition generates shallow, selfish prayer...shallow, selfish prayer. No deep communion. There are times when I pray fervently for God to do a certain thing and I ask specifically because He has the right to say no and if I don't ask specifically, then I don't get the "no" that I need to get to learn that He's in control. I don't just pray vague prayers, "do whatever You want." Sometimes I storm the gates of heaven, sometimes God says yes to that prayer, sometimes He says no. But I have such confidence in God that I'm really totally content with what He decides. Look, I'm human but I can't imagine a scene where God would do anything that would disappoint me. I can't imagine what it would be. If He spares a life, or takes a life, it's the best, it's right because He defines what is right. I just don't think that unless you have a deep understanding of God, you can accept those things in life.

I was asked this last week, "How do I...what do I do when I get depressed?" I said, "I've never been depressed." What's there to be depressed about? My God is in control of everything. How do you get depressed? Well when you feel like, you know, you're not appreciated, you're not loved. I just go back to being a slave and a ministry is a mercy, I don't deserve it any way. But I...I grieve that there are people who call themselves Christians who have such a low view of God that when they pray their little selfish prayers and don't get what they want, they condemn God.

Another thing to mention. If you don't do expositional preaching, you fail to lead people to self-denial, cross-bearing humility. I think the greatest virtue is humility. I think that...in the New Testament...true humility is a genuine assessment of who we are compared to who God is. And if there's one thing I

would cherish in a church, it's humility because only humble people love sacrificially. How would you like to have a church full of people who come to find their own fulfillment? What in the world kind of collision would that be? You couldn't even keep up with it. Rather than a church all of whom are gathered together to glorify Christ sacrificially, self-denying, taking up their cross. You can't teach humility in a felt-needs environment.

Another thing, a failure to do expositional preaching cheats people of the means to truly delighting in the Lord. Shallow knowledge means shallow love. As you go through your life and as you study the Scripture year after year, after year, after year, it's so awesome, it's so stunning, it's so staggering, it's so consistent, it's so powerful, it's so true that it just increases your confidence, your trust and therefore your joy. John said it this way, "These things I write unto you, little children, that your joy may be full." The more you know, the more you rejoice in your Lord.

Well, let me see if there's just one or two just in the last minute. Oh well, we'll just leave it at that. One more comment, Steve will like this. A failure to do expositional preaching lacks the general manliness of message and ministry. This is a manly thing to do...this is a manly thing to do. Act like men. Fortitude, courage, 1 Corinthians 16, right? Fortitude, conviction, courage...oh, I see so many preachers who are anything but manly. We're not talking about mannerisms alone, although a lot of that bothers me. (Laughter) We're talking about fortitude in the proclamation of the truth, manliness. And you know what your church will do? You'll attract women and you will attract men. There needs to be a manliness in the ministry, manliness means conviction, courage...love that, 2 Corinthians 4...Paul, Paul, every day you face death, every day you face death, persecution, hostility, on and on. Why? Soften up, ease up. I love what he says, "I believed therefore I spoke." That's integrity...that's integrity.

Well you probably knew all these things and yet I hope it's a bit of encouragement to you. It's an encouragement to my own heart, fires up my own jets a little bit just to be reminded of what I've been called to do. Again I'm very honored that Steve asked me and I'm just thrilled that you all came and you encourage me with feedback I see in your faces. This is a good group and may the Lord multiply your usefulness.

Father, thanks for a wonderful time, this morning. Just thinking through these things and so many implications to how we preach. We just scratched the surface, really. Thank You for faithful men who come here because this is what they believe. Encourage them, strengthen them, use them mightily, Lord. Make us content just to serve You knowing the results are in Your hand. Give us excellence and devotion, faithfulness, purity of heart and life and fill our lives with joy. Just the privilege of serving You is enough. What a joy. To wear the uniform and march in the triumph is enough. Bless every church represented here and may the desire of Your heart for these churches be fulfilled through the faithfulness of these men, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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