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PR 610 Servant as Proclaimer

Michael Pasquarello

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Course Name PR610, Fall 2003
Contact Information: Professor Mike Pasquarello
Beeson Center 216
859-858-2239
PR000MP_office@asburyseminary.edu

Welcome: I am pleased to welcome you to PR610. Imagine this course as a semester long sermon, an extended conversation with God and among ourselves. We will listen to God's Word and to each other, responding through the faith, hope, and love we share in Christ.

My Hope For Our Time Together: My hope is that this course will promote a partnership of teaching and learning that will impart and foster vision and discernment for preaching as a theological and pastoral practice in service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Crucified and Risen. We will view preaching as both a gift of the Holy Spirit and a human vocation by which the Risen Lord continues to speak to his people for the life of the world. We will approach preaching with the assumption that the proclamation of the Gospel by means of Scripture is the central (although not exclusive) activity by which the Church is continually created, sustained, corrected, and strengthened by God's Word to worship and participate in the life and mission of the Triune God.

Not Just Skill but Wisdom: An essential aspect of this course will be to gain a vital and necessary understanding of preaching as a practice of the Church that requires habits of thinking and speaking: practical wisdom, character, and Christian dispositions that are acquired through: 1) the practices of daily prayer, obedience, and pastoral discipline; 2) consistent and reverent reading, study, and personal appropriation of Scripture as the Word of God addressed to his people and for the world; 3) the testing of biblical interpretation by means of the central theological convictions of the Church, and in particular the Wesleyan tradition.

My Vision for You: I look forward to seeing you come to perceive yourselves as members of the whole company of preachers --- guided by the witness of the prophets and apostles who point us to Christ--- a conversation initiated by God on behalf of his people. Our conversation together, our collaboration and cooperation in learning, will be designed to create an environment that will enable us to practice, discuss, understand, and give a faithful account of our identity and activity as preachers of God's Word.

So, welcome to this semester long journey together. I believe that this course will enable us to:

- 1) focus on the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the power and wisdom for our ministry of preaching
- 2) listen with discernment to the Scriptures as source, norm, and goal of our sermons

- 3) share with each other and me in the joys, temptations, risks, and anguish of preaching
- 4) acquire practical skills appropriate for preparing ourselves and our sermons for preaching the Word of God in Jesus Christ
- 5) appreciate the urgency of preaching in pastoral ministry and the mission of the Church for the life of the world
- 6) embrace the following criteria of a good sermon:

faithfulness to the text of scripture
articulation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ
contextual appropriateness
clarity, simplicity, and gracefulness of expression

Office Hours: Monday: 9-12am. ET. I will be on-line to answer your questions and messages during this time. Please communicate through the classroom discussion center so that all may benefit from our exchange. Personal messages may be sent to my office. I am available for personal conversations by appointment. It is important to me that you realize I am available and responsive. If you have messages that need immediate attention, please flag them as "Urgent."

A Little Bit About Me

Pastoral Ministry: I have taught preaching at Asbury Seminary for two years. Prior to coming to Asbury, I served United Methodist congregations in North Carolina for 18 years. These churches were situated in cities, small towns, and suburban communities. It is important that you know that your teacher has been a preacher and has preached more than just a few sermons! I consider myself very blessed to be able to share with you from my pastoral experience and my graduate education in the practice of preaching.

Education: About 10 years ago I discerned that God was calling me to return to school and the possibility of teaching. I was able to enroll in a PhD program in the church history with a focus in the history of preaching through the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. I also was privileged to be an Instructor in preaching at Duke Divinity School while remaining in full-time pastoral ministry. It was a great experience to learn about many of the great preachers in Christian history while continuing to preach on a weekly basis in the church. I hope that our course together will have the right blend of learning and doing, thinking and speaking, theology and practice, wisdom from the past that serves to guide the present.

Called: I was called into ministry from what I thought was to be a long career as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. But God had other plans, so I left after five years of active duty and returned to school. I did not know at that time that I would be where I am now, but I can see that my life has been guided to this time and place. I am

sure each of you has an interesting story to tell about your conversion, your call, and your plans for ministry.

Getting to Know Each Other: Post something about yourself to the Discussion Center during the first three days of the class. We will be spending a significant amount of quality time together this semester, so it is important that we take time to get acquainted. Tell us something about your work, your education, your family, and your interests. Share something about your interest and desire for preaching God's Word, and any expectations or concerns you may have. Be clear and limit this post to 500 words. I am very enthusiastic about what we will do together, but I also am concerned about my inexperience with Exel. I hope we will be gracious and patient with each other in all our conversations and responses.

ExL Support Team: Where to go for help

For technical support contact Andy Adams, ExL_Support@asburyseminary.edu

For questions related to the ExL program contact Kevin Osborn,

ExL_Director@asburyseminary.edu, or Amy Jo Adams,

ExL_Coach@asburyseminary.edu

For library reference support contact Hannah Kirsch,

Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu

For interlibrary loans contact Dot James, Dorothy_James@asburyseminary.edu

Windows and Icons:

The Course Center will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as all class modules.

The Discussion Center will be used for all public communications. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the modules, the assignments, or anything else, which would be of interest to your classmates and the professor, you should post to the Discussion Center.

The PR610XL Office is for private correspondence between you and me. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly before all of your classmates.

The Archives Center will be used for storing conversations that have already taken place during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too unmanageable.

The Chat Center is intended primarily for real-time interaction among students. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics. Remember: None of the conversations carried on in this location are ever saved.

The Resource Center provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, chapel services in Estes

Chapel, ExL Updates, Guidelines for Success, Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a Powerpoint Viewer, and a Real Audio Player.

Course Description: (From the Seminary Catalogue) A prerequisite for all preaching courses. An integrative approach to the theory and practice of preaching. Considers preaching as an act of worship and its role in facilitating congregational worship and witness. Emphasizes the anointing ministry of the Holy Spirit in the preparation and delivery of sermons and character of the preacher as person and prophet. Views sermon building as an outflow of theology, contemporary life, and scriptural understanding, calling for imaginative and clear communication for relevant utterance in the context of personal, social, and cultural challenges. Prerequisite: Inductive Biblical Studies---2; SP501.

Course Requirements: 1) Reading and Responding to assigned texts, 2) Class Discussion, 3) Preaching and Responding to Sermons, 4) Practical Theology of Preaching Essay (Details posted below)

Expectations: We enter into this course with great expectation, which is a sign of our hope that God is at work teaching and equipping us for the high calling of preaching his Word to his people.

Assignments: We may expect that you will be prepared for all class discussions and that you will read assignments as scheduled, submitting all written responses in a timely manner. We may also expect that you will enter into our conversations with clear, concise postings that are seasoned with the grace of Godly wisdom. I will post discussion prompters and questions to lead us through our reflection on the practice of preaching. Please remember that this course is not an "information" course that requires memorization of material. What we are after here is providing an orientation, a sense, a direction; a way of seeing what preaching is and does in service of God's Word. You will be thinking about the matters we take up for the rest of your lives!!! Do not become frustrated if you are unable to get it all "figured out" in a few months. Christian Preaching is not a formula or technique that you can learn by following a few rules or steps. I have been at this for over 20 years myself and still do not have it figured out.

Sermons: We may expect that you will prepare and submit two sermons. These will be from assigned texts: Old Testament, Epistle, and Gospel. I will not be able to be physically present when you preach your sermons. I will, however, rely on a "sermon group" that you will gather to listen and respond to your preaching. This group must be comprised of at least five lay persons. If you are serving a congregation or have the opportunity to preach to a congregation, designate at least five in attendance as your sermon group. An evaluation form is provided in this syllabus for their use. (only five are required to respond in writing). You will turn in these forms to me when you submit your sermon on videotape. This requirement is mandatory.

Listening and Responding: In addition to your sermon group, you will be responding to each other by means of team folders and the class discussion center. This will include posting and evaluating sermon manuscripts with the other members of your team. You will need to invite a member of your team to serve as your responder. This person will engage the others members of the team in a discussion of your sermon after all have read the manuscript. I will provide a schedule and due dates for this assignment. This plan is extremely exciting, since you will get feedback and evaluation from me, your peers, and laypersons. All this is for your benefit and good! Do not be intimidated by this process, it is designed to help you learn and grow.

Final Essay: In addition, you will write and submit a Practical Theology of Preaching, a revised compilation of your written work throughout the semester with a concise summary statement attached. This is not a research paper, but is a serious, reflective essay on our life as persons called to preach the Word of God in and for the Church. Drawing from our reading, discussions, and your study and preaching of scripture, this paper will provide an opportunity to express what you believe is most important regarding who we are and what we must do to be faithful preachers of God's Word in the church and for the sake of the world.

Online Etiquette: The way we conduct ourselves in this class is extremely important. As preachers we are very self-conscious and sensitive to criticism. When we preach we are communicating more than ideas, we speak from faith to faith, communicating something of ourselves. In our responses to one another we need to remember the admonition of St. Paul: "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law." (Romans 13:8)

What you can expect from me:

I will share with you out of my love and knowledge of God's Word for the practice of preaching. I will be sharing in our discussions, checking in on our Discussion Center on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I will enter into our conversations as an active participant, but I will not control the communication. I will, however, contribute as will be necessary to direct our postings in a way that is consistent with our course objectives. I will treat you with respect and Christian love, taking seriously your postings, responding in a manner that I believe will contribute to our learning and growth.

You may expect that I will not be an expert in this method of teaching, and that I will make mistakes as a result of my inexperience; this is my first Exel Course! But I am very committed to this class and will do all I am able to continue learning. I encourage you to communicate with me if I am not being clear, or if what I am requiring is confusing.

Grading:

Please read the Asbury Seminary Catalogue for details on grading criteria. Please know that I see the process of assessment, evaluation and grading as a means to learning and practical knowledge. I will ask you to evaluate yourselves during the course of the

semester; this will be an exercise for you to think about your progress in relation to the goals of the course. I also recognize, having taught preaching since 1996, that each of you has a different story to tell, different kinds of Christian experience, theological training, and represent a variety of church backgrounds. My job is to assist you in discovering your gifts and voice for proclamation, to help you integrate and use your seminary education for the ministry of the Word within a Trinitarian framework that is faithful to scripture and classic Christian Orthodoxy.

How To Submit Work:

I will want you to submit your work by email attachment to both the Discussion Center and the Course Office. This will allow the other members of the class to read your reflections, which will provide a common starting point for our discussions.

Required Reading:

William H. Willimon, Pastor

Charles Wood, *The Formation of Christian Understanding*

Lawrence Stookey, *Calendar*

Fleming Rutledge, *The Bible and The New York Times*

Marva Dawn, *Unfettered Hope: A Call to Faithful Living in an Affluent Society*

Recommended Reading:

I will make recommendations as our discussion unfolds.

Course Schedule: I will post assignments, discussion questions, and other thoughts about preaching each Monday to chart our work for two weeks at a time. Please be certain to check the class center, since I will be looking for your timely responsiveness. The nature of this practice requires that we be able to talk and think together, to learn the art of practical reasoning which guides our judgment as pastors. This is a continual conversation that will unfold over the entire semester.

(Modules including specific dates and due dates in bold)

Module One: The Readings, Discussion and Exercises: Weeks 1-6. During Module One we will discuss the required readings with an eye towards preaching. I will ask you to post your reflections so that all may read them and respond. You may incorporate your reflections into your final paper. This will allow you to prepare for the final essay, through reading and discussion, during the course of an entire semester rather than waiting until the last minute.

Module Two: First Round of Sermons: Weeks 7-9 During this time period, we will be working on studying and preparing to preach. I will be leading our discussion to consider practical matters of pastoral ministry. We will also share the emerging discoveries we are making as we immerse ourselves in scripture. By the end of this module, you will have prepared your sermon by means of the exegetical guidelines listed below, preached to your lay listeners, posted your sermon for the response of others, and engaged in discussion and mutual evaluation and encouragement.

Module Three: Second Round of Sermons: Weeks 10-12

Module Four: Practical Theology of Preaching Essay: Week 13. This essay will be due during Finals Week. We will spend time in conversation together in order to reflect on the semester and assist each other in gathering our thoughts and convictions regarding the practice of preaching.

**FOR WE DO NOT PREACH OURSELVES, BUT JESUS CHRIST AS LORD,
AND OURSELVES AS YOUR SERVANTS FOR JESUS' SAKE.” II Cor. 4:5.**

PR 610 THE SERVANT AS PROCLAIMER

FALL TERM 2003: EXEL

PROFESSOR MIKE PASQUARELLO

michael_pasquarello@ asburyseminary.edu

Ext. 859-858-2239

Office Hours: Monday, 10-12 AM, and by appt.

The purpose of this course is to promote a partnership of teaching and learning that will nurture vision and discernment for preaching as a theological and pastoral activity in service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Crucified and Risen. Preaching will be viewed as both a gift of the Holy Spirit and a human vocation by which the Risen Lord continues to speak to, in, and through his people for the life of the world. This course will assume that proclamation of the Gospel by means of Scripture is the central (although not exclusive) activity by which the Church is continually created, sustained, corrected, and strengthened by God's Word to worship and participate in the life of the Triune God.

This course is therefore designed as an extended conversation that will exemplify and encourage pastoral competence and confidence in speaking the Word of God to form Christian conviction and character within a community that bears witness to the Kingdom that has arrived in Christ. Preaching will be regarded as an act of worship offered to the God of Israel and Jesus Christ who continues to speak and enact his gracious promises and saving purposes through the witness of the Prophets and Apostles in the power of the Holy Spirit.

An important objective of this course will be to gain a vital and necessary understanding of preaching as a theological and ecclesial practice that requires: 1) the practices of daily prayer and obedience --- pastoral discipline; 2) consistent reading, study, and personal appropriation of Scripture as the Word of God addressed to God's people and for the world; 3) the testing of biblical interpretation by means of the central theological convictions of the Church Catholic, and in particular, the Wesleyan tradition, to insure

faithful homiletic performance that glorifies God and produces Christian disciples who aspire to a shared life of holiness in Christ. To be consistent with the nature and purpose of preaching as a theological discipline, a strong emphasis will be placed upon the life-long task of acquiring practical wisdom appropriate to the pastoral vocation: the spiritual and moral attentiveness and insight necessary to call the Church to know, love, and serve the Triune God whose speech authors its life and secures its future.

A primary goal of this course is that students will come to see themselves as members of the whole company of preachers --- guided by the witness of the prophets and apostles --- in conversation with God and on behalf of his people. The conditions of our conversation together, therefore, will encourage the discovery of a discourse by which preaching as a theological and pastoral practice may be examined, understood, articulated, and defended. Students will be encouraged to view themselves as responsible participants in the ongoing narrative of the Word of God rather than detached consumers or users of skills and techniques; as life-long learners who aspire to embody Christian virtue and exercise Christian discernment for responsible self-involvement in the concrete forms of life and conditions of particular congregations in order to bring Christ to speech.

It is my hope that you will:

- 1) focus on the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the power and wisdom for your ministry of preaching
- 2) listen with discernment to the whole canon of Scripture as source, norm, and goal of your sermons
- 3) share with each other and me in the joys, temptations, risks, and anguish of preaching
- 4) acquire practical skills appropriate for preparing yourselves and your sermons for articulating the Word of God in Jesus Christ
- 5) appreciate the urgency of preaching in pastoral ministry and the mission of the Church for the life of the world
- 6) embrace the following criteria of a good sermon:

faithfulness to the text
articulation of the Gospel
contextual accuracy
coherence, simplicity, and gracefulness of expression

REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Read assignments as scheduled, prepare written responses, and participate in class conversation.
- 2) Preach two sermons, choosing from three assigned texts: a lesson from a Gospel, an Epistle, and Old Testament book. In addition, your sermon preparation must include theological and pastoral reflection on your assigned texts for preaching on particular occasions: an evangelistic sermon, Holy Communion, a Baptism, and a Funeral. A manuscript, exegetical notes, theological and pastoral reflection that support your homiletic judgments and decisions will be submitted on the day the sermons are due. I will provide worksheets to guide you in your sermon preparation.
- 3) Class attendance and participation is assumed. Assignments turned in late will be penalized. An important element of the course is to foster Christian friendship and mutual assistance rather than professional competition or jealousy. Your attendance, participation, comments, and encouragement when others preach are imperative. Preachers will ask a fellow student to serve as a responder for each in-class sermon. The responder will initiate the discussion on the sermon. Sermons must be preached on the assigned dates.
- 4) Required Texts: (As we prepare to discuss each of the following books I will post particular questions and reflections for your consideration; but what follows will be sufficient to provide a sense of what we will be doing together).

Pastor: William H. Willimon

Read Willimon as a practical hand-book for pastors. What challenges does he present to us as preachers? What in his description of the pastoral office do you find noteworthy? According to Willimon, what does God-centered, biblical preaching look like? How does this require that we interpret Scripture? What kind of God does it proclaim? What kind of people does it aim to produce? Where and how do we humans figure into preaching, if it is primarily about God rather than us? How does preaching function as an act of worship? How is preaching both a theological and pastoral practice that serves the church?

The Formation on Christian Understanding: Charles Wood

We will read Wood to gain insight on how the Bible functions in the life of the church. Our focus will be on developing a theological vision of scripture and interpretation that leads to discerning the identity and activity of God and the way of faithful obedience that is appropriately responsive. What does Wood say about scripture that is important for preachers to remember? How does he demonstrate the function of the canon? Why is this important? What is biblical authority for preaching?

Calendar: Lawrence Stookey

Letting Stookey's presentation of the Christian Year guide your thinking, tell why it is essential that we think *theologically* about how we order worship, and within it, preaching. Reflect on how you might order your ministry of the Word as a pastor. What is important for you to remember? Why? How will your vision help you and your people to live faithfully in the presence of the Triune God?

The Bible and the New York Times: Fleming Rutledge (Bring Rutledge to class each time we meet) Particular sermons will be assigned for discussion.

Unfettered Hope: A Call to Faithful Living in an Affluent Society, Marva Dawn.

We will read Dawn to help understand the particular challenges for preaching and ministry in our culture. Her argument is powerful, and she critiques the church for the ways it has accommodated itself to an affluent culture, thus depriving Christians of their true hope, which is in the God of Jesus Christ. Respond to Dawn's assessment and tell what her book has prompted you to think about more seriously when you consider your call to ministry.

- 5) Plagiarism. Preachers are notorious for borrowing from the work of others. I want to encourage you to see your sermons as a statement of the whole Church's truth, and to allow yourself to be guided by the wisdom of others. However, in your exegetical notes and sermons let me know whom you are reading and from whom you have learned. In addition, I will expect that your sermons will be fresh, new, and current, rather than work you have already used.

More on Sermons:

Sermons will be 12 to 15 minutes in length. Sermons will be videotaped and submitted by mail to the professor within three days of the preaching date. Written responses from lay listeners should accompany the sermon video. Sermon manuscripts and exegetical notes should be submitted to the discussion center and office for the benefit of the whole class.

Please double-space your manuscripts and type your text at the beginning in single-spaces. In preparing your exegetical notes, I will expect you to utilize the skills you have learned in your courses in biblical studies and your knowledge of the biblical languages. Please do not use Internet preaching helps and sources (I do not mean ATLA) or one-volume commentaries (Such as the Abingdon one-volume commentary on the Bible). For this course, it is important that you use solid, critical commentaries, essays, and other works that have been written to support proclamation and teaching in the Church. Do not skip exegetical work in order to go directly to exposition and application. I also encourage you to limit your use of illustrations, making them brief and related directly to the message of the sermon. Examples that demonstrate the embodiment of the Word in life are superior and more faithful expressions of the Gospel. (We will discuss this issue)

In all cases, keep your eye on the central focus of the sermon based upon your careful reading and listening to Scripture. The form and function of the sermon must serve the proclamation of Christ and the claims he is making on our lives in the present.

Remember that we are interested in exegesis as the context for proclamation, we are moving from the classroom to the sanctuary, from an academic setting to the praise and adoration of the Triune God. You will discover your sermon by engaging in study and prayer that positions you to hear the Spirit speak in the text; the Word God desires to speak will inform, shape, and guide your sermon! Your sermon, however, is not about the text. Neither is your sermon a lecture or a talk about your exegesis, nor is it a testimony about your experience and journey. The Word we proclaim is not a text, nor is it our selves; rather it is Jesus Christ, the living Lord who speaks and summons us to follow him today. Your scriptural text is a particular witness to the God of Israel and the Gospel; its purpose is to render his identity and activity to us in the present, and to invite us to appropriate and faithful response so we may live into the glorious future God is now actively creating.

Consider the following when you are preparing to preach:

- 1) How does the text witness to God?
- 2) What sin or sins does the text uncover or address? What virtues, or examples of faith and obedience?
- 3) How does this text PREACH the Gospel of God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ?
- 4) What is God doing: teaching, commanding, asking, inviting, persuading, encouraging, promising, blessing, cursing, etc.?
- 5) What is surprising in this text? Odd or strange?
- 6) How is this text a Word to and for the Church: what is it doing to form, to sustain, to correct, to encourage, to build up, to empower disciples? How is it doing this?
- 7) Where and how have I seen this Word being enacted in the life of the Church, among Christian people, or in the world?

Think of your sermon in terms of Focus and Function:

The focus of the sermon should:

- a) unify the whole text
- b) encapsulate the Gospel
- c) have an impact on life

You should be able to state this in a sentence or two! Keep it clear and simple!

The function of the sermon is what you hope the Holy Spirit will do with your words and the listening of your hearers. This function should be derived from a close reading of the biblical text in conversation with your preaching context. You may assume we are your congregation for your two in-class sermons.

ASSIGNMENTS: A course schedule will be distributed during the first week of class.

On the day of our class final (there is no final exam!) you will hand in a Practical Theology of Preaching, which will be a revised compilation of your written work throughout the semester, with a concise summary statement attached. This is not a research paper, but is a serious, *reflective essay* on our life as pastors who are called to preach the Word of God in and for the Church. Drawing from our reading, discussions, and your study and preaching of Scripture, this paper will provide an opportunity to express what you believe is most important for us to remember concerning who we are and what we must do to be faithful preachers in our contemporary situation.

I encourage you to begin the practice of listening to sermons with theological and spiritual discernment. This practice is not for the sake of being critical of others, but to help you internalize the self-critical capacities necessary for faithful preaching. Consider:

Faithfulness to Scripture, Articulation of the Gospel, Fittingness for the situation, Coherence, clarity, gracefulness of expression. What did you see in this person and hear in this sermon that turned your attention to the God of Jesus Christ?.

I am available to meet with you and to discuss matters concerning this course, preaching, and our call to pastoral ministry. Please feel free to email me at any time! I will respond as soon as possible. I also would welcome the opportunity to have lunch with each of you at least once during this semester to get better acquainted and to discuss your vocational plans and this course.

GRADING:

Sermons and exegetical notes= 60%

Written assignments and class participation= 20%

Final Essay= 20%

IMPORTANT: Sermon delivery will be graded on a pass/fail basis. However, a letter grade will be assigned to the exegetical notes and reflection that accompany them. The purpose of this way of grading is to place maximum emphasis on developing the necessary habits and discipline that leads to strong proclamation.

I hope you will enter fully into this conversation with me and with one another. I consider you as colleagues who are being formed to share a common ministry of the Word. Let us pursue this high and holy calling together.

Peace,
Mike Pasquarello

Sermon Evaluation PR 610

Preacher _____

Scripture Text _____

Faithfulness to the sermon text

Articulation of the Gospel

Contextual appropriateness

Coherence, simplicity, and gracefulness of expression

PR610: Thinking about preaching for Baptism, Holy Communion, and a Service of Death and Resurrection

The pastor is charged by God to always preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ by means of the Word of God that is spoken through Holy Scripture. This primary responsibility is not set aside on the days when the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are celebrated, nor at the time of a funeral, when the church participates in a service of Death and Resurrection. These occasions are special times when the Church pays particular attention to its authoritative narratives (the Bible and Christian tradition) and customary practices (baptism, eucharist, and remembering the dead) in order to have its judgments, emotions and life shaped and formed according to the pattern of Jesus Christ.

Christ is the One whose presence is most important during these occasions, when our Risen Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit, comes to give new life in the waters of Baptism, reconciles and renews his people through the Bread and the Cup, speaking with the power of resurrection and life in the midst of death to grant hope, assurance, comfort, and strength.

Baptism, Holy Communion, and a Service of Death and Resurrection enact the Gospel, showing through dramatic and corporate actions what God is doing in the present, based upon his faithfulness and promises that have been demonstrated in the past through the witness of Scripture. These services are times when God is remembered and praised for his mighty acts of salvation, the same mighty power that works in and through them once again to call us into the future, which God is creating through the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit.

Your sermon is a pastoral opportunity and responsibility to name the particular identity and activity of God at these times, and to invite your people to respond appropriately. It is only through the lens of Scripture that you will be able to see such events in ways that point to God's faithful and gracious action.

The people involved are not the primary actors, neither should they receive the primary attention of your sermon. Thus Baptism is not simply a human response, nor is Holy Communion effective because we understand it or have certain feelings about it. Neither

is a funeral simply a eulogy about the person who has died. To preach in these ways is to empty the Gospel of its power by placing the emphasis on ourselves rather than the Triune God.

In addition to placing the central focus on Christ, the Church needs to be the primary recipient of the message rather than individuals. Scripture reveals that our Christian identity is given in and through the Body of Christ; Baptism, Holy Communion, and a Service of Death and Resurrection have to do with the whole Body, not just a few of its members. These acts offer a public and corporate witness for God; they show the kind of God we worship and the kind of people we are because of him.

It is important that you do your homework in preparing to preach on such occasions, since Scripture offers rich resources for speaking to your people in terms of Baptism, Communion, death and resurrection. It is best to keep things simple, clear, and personal, reminding all involved of the identity and activity of God in the particular situation. As a preacher, your sermon should reflect the appropriate awe, wonder, gratitude, and praise that God richly deserves for new life in Christ and his Body, for renewed life at the Lord's Table, and for life that is even stronger than death: the life of God's kingdom, triumphant in the death and resurrection of Christ, which is the richness of the inheritance of the saints. These services are signs of God's miraculous work, they also effect what they proclaim, and your sermon is a means by which the Spirit will do so in the present.

A strong tendency among pastors is to see these services as means for creating a meaningful experience for the people involved. Such sermons usually end up becoming exercises in sentimentality with little Christian content. Psychology replaces theology as the primary way of seeing what is going on, and emotional gratification is substituted for Christian formation, for building-up and strengthening Christian people. By focusing on Christ, and by allowing the story of Christ to guide your sermons, you will be able to resist the strong temptation to reduce the Gospel to the size of our humanity. Baptism, Holy Communion, and the memory and hope of the church at the time of death announce that a new world is on its way, and these are particular moments when this reality is especially intense.

There is a common sort of pastoral malpractice that happens most often at funerals, when the attention being paid to the person who has died exceeds the attention given to Christ, the strong Son of God who has conquered sin and death. In addition, eulogies are often little more than pagan speeches that praise people for their accomplishments and achievements without giving due credit to God who is the gracious author of every life and good gift. It is very important that Christians be remembered for whom they are in Christ, and that our words about them be offered as a witness of Christ's grace and faithfulness to and through them. In this way we simply name the reality of our Christian life, acknowledging that we have been called to entrust and to give ourselves to Christ in both life and death. This witness provides an opportunity to proclaim the Easter faith of the Church, to announce that God's love in Jesus Christ is stronger and more consuming than death itself, the last enemy we all must face.

It also is very easy to allow a baptism, especially that of an infant, to become a sloppy, sentimental moment, one in which the cuteness of the baby overshadows the claim of death and resurrection being made on the life of the child. Baptism marks the child as a child of God, an identity that is revealed and imparted by Christ himself through the Spirit's ongoing work in the church. This is a life of faithful obedience, lived by following the pattern of Jesus in his relationship with the Father, and in relationship within the family of God, the new humanity created in Christ Jesus. This commitment, which is made by the parents, must eventually be adopted and embraced by the child, which means the baptism must be seen as a beginning rather than an ending. This implies significant responsibilities on behalf of the congregation and the family, which should be spoken by the pastor in the sermon. Without a strong theology of baptism, the Lord's Supper loses its significance, and the power of resurrection hope is diminished for those who die and those who remain. As St. Paul says, if we have only to hope in this life, we are the most to be pitied! Preach the Gospel: not self-help, sentimentality, or psychology.

As you prepare sermons for these very important occasions, remember that your words not only inform and instruct, but your words are actually instruments the Spirit is using to create the world that God is bringing about in Jesus Christ, and that you are inviting your people to enter that world through their hearing and response. These are holy times, set apart and sanctified by Christ himself; we need to give them our full, careful, and reverent attention. This is only possible when the preacher has also done his or her pastoral work in visiting, counseling, instructing, and praying. It is most important to take time to know those involved so that the Word you proclaim is spoken to and for them in the midst of a witnessing church, which also needs to hear and to rehear the story of its salvation at critical times in its life.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXEGETICAL/THEOLOGICAL/ HOMILETICAL NOTES (This may be written in an essay format so long as you have carefully considered the following questions)

Notes are due with a manuscript of the sermon on the day you are scheduled to preach. Please type in a double-spaced format. References may be included in the body of the text, set off in parentheses.

- 1) Outline the text
- 2) Mark the boundaries of the text
- 3) Comment on any major textual problems
- 4) Note any significant translation problems
- 5) Discuss key words in the text, using concordance, lexicon, dictionary, word book, etc. This is the place to use your knowledge of Greek or Hebrew
- 6) Comment on the form, genre, of the text and its significance
- 7) Trace the text sources, especially (for New Testament texts) in the Old Testament, or other early Christian sources, such as prayers, liturgies, hymns, kerygma, didache
- 8) Relate the text to its cultural environment
- 9) Relate the text in its immediate context in scripture and compare to parallels in other books
- 10) Note the literary features of the text and their significance for proclamation
- 11) Pay careful attention to how the text embodies the theology of the Gospel

On the basis of your exegetical study, list three or four major issues raised by the text that the sermon must deal with. I encourage you to consult a variety of other sources, after you have done your exegetical work. Do not limit your reading to contemporary commentaries and works. Look at the Fathers (such as Augustine and Chrysostom) the Reformers (such as Luther and Calvin) and John Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament* and *Standard Sermons*, and the exegetical work of theologians such as Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*.

Reflect on the following:

How does the text witness to the character and activity of God?

What sin, or sins, does the text expose or address?

How does the text "preach" the Gospel of God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ?

What response (s) does the text require of us to be heard and enacted? What would the life of the church be like if we were to take this text seriously?

What is surprising, strange, or offensive in this text? What is comforting, assuring, and promising?

Has this text played a major role in doctrinal, ecclesial, liturgical, pastoral, ethical, historical debates, events, or controversies? (Creeds, heresies, Reformation, renewal movements, cultural and historical shifts or changes?)

How does our understanding and practice of Wesley's "Scripture Way of Salvation" inform your reading of this text?

How is the text a "church word" what is it doing to form, sustain, correct, or empower the church?

What assumptions, values, wisdom, and behaviors of our culture does this text engage, challenge, undermine, or affirm?

Where or how have I seen this text being enacted in the church/world?

What theological, exegetical, historical, and homiletic sources have you consulted?

A FOCUS STATEMENT is a description of the central, controlling, and unifying claim being made by scripture (and the Word of God) that will shape and guide the sermon.

The focus statement should:

Unify the whole text

Encapsulate the Gospel

Have an impact on life

A FUNCTION STATEMENT is a description of what the preacher hopes the sermon will do as the Spirit uses your words to speak the Word into the lives of hearers. Ask yourself, based on your study and reflection, what you believe is the kind of response that is appropriate and faithful to the Word spoken through this biblical text and your sermon.

In one or two sentences, express the essence of the message you intend to preach

Give the sermon an appropriate title

In one or two paragraphs, tell how and why you would revise this sermon for appropriate use in an evangelistic event, Holy Communion, a Baptism, a Funeral.

Your notes are not a research paper. These instructions are a guide to assist you in the important work of homiletic exegesis, and to help you think by means of scripture for the purpose of proclamation.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

For **general questions regarding the ExL program**, contact Kevin Osborn at ExL_Director@asburyseminary.edu or Extended_Learning@asburyseminary.edu.

For **technical support**, contact Jared Porter at ExL_Support@asburyseminary.edu.

For **library reference support**, contact Hannah Kirsch at Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu.

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Toll-Free Reference Help Line: 1-866-454-2733

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To request material from the B.L. Fisher Library, begin by searching the library catalog (for books available in the library) or one of the restricted journal databases available on the library's website (www.asburyseminary.edu/library - choose "library catalog" or "restricted databases"). Then send an email to the reference desk citing the sources that you would like to request. If you need help searching the databases, do not hesitate to call (1-866-454-2733) or email the reference desk. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Wilmore campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

Please allow 5-10 business days for all requests to be filled. ExL students are billed for the cost of photocopies (5 cents per page); however, shipping via media rate is free. (Media rate normally takes 5 business days for shipping, but it can take two weeks to addresses in the West). Express mail services (prices vary according to weight) and scanning (10 cents per page in pdf format) are also available. Requests

generally require 1-2 business days to be processed. Plan ahead and make your requests early enough to allow for shipping and processing!

PR-610-02. BY 590618749.020-2013. Their zeal as proclaimers of God's Kingdom has impressed even their critics. Their love toward one another makes some non-Witnesses wish that more people acted that way. Yet, many still wonder, 'Who really are Jehovah's Witnesses?' Others have written about them, not always impartially. Probably they were not aware of all the facts. Jehovah's Witnesses are a people widely known. Their preaching and way of worship have penetrated national and racial groups worldwide and have been embraced by people young and old, at every economic and educational level. Their zeal as proclaimers of God's Kingdom has impressed even their critics. Their love toward one another makes some non-Witnesses wish that more people acted that way. PR 610 Servant as Proclaimer. place.asburyseminary.edu. place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2639&context PR 610 Servant as Proclaimer. File Format: PDF/Adobe Acrobat. 1 Jan 2004