

The Gospel and Preaching

The Bible is given to a fallen world to reveal God and his gracious plan to rescue the undeserving. In this advanced network we will begin by considering various approaches to preaching, including what we will call the Big Idea and the Big Story approaches to preaching the Word of God. Every text was written in the context of a fallen world and written to people in this fallen world – so every text must in some way be redemptive, shining the light of God’s goodness into our darkness. What does it mean for us to preach the good news from every passage in the Bible – to preach redemptively?

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I. Two Types of Preaching

A. John Stott’s metaphor of the bridge between two worlds

“Conservative” vs “Liberal”

B. An alternative polarization of preaching

1. Pointing to me – top tips, guilt trips, etc.
2. Pointing to Him – to the Gospel, that is, to God, to Christ

II. Two Big Schools of Preaching:

A. A Vague Classification of “Schools of Preaching”

		Location of Emphasis	
		<i>Broad</i>	<i>Narrow</i>
Biblical / Theological Substance	<i>High</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>C</i>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>

Some broad generalisations:

- A. Topical / top tips preaching
- B. Some “narrative preaching”
- C. Some traditional “expository preaching” (includes Big Idea Preaching)
- D. Some traditional “doctrinal preaching” (includes “Big Story Preaching”)

Our Direction This Week:

Learn from all schools, but primarily focus on two:

- 1. Big Idea Preaching – Historical/Grammatical hermeneutic
“Rightly handle the word...” (2Tim.2:15)
- 2. Big Story Preaching – Historical/Redemptive hermeneutic
“Preach Christ and him crucified...” (1Cor.2:1-5)

Both approaches can be highly effective. And both approaches can be done very poorly. One way both will fall short is where the Bible is mishandled.

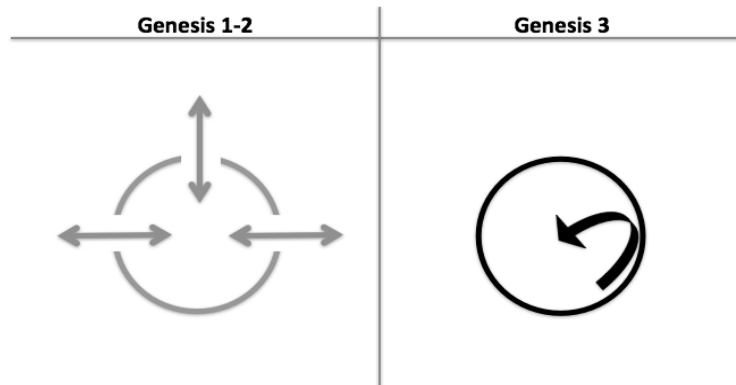
Big idea folks focus on the specific passage, but this cannot guarantee accurate exegesis, nor effective presentation of the relevance of that passage to listeners. If the preacher harvests the imperatives in a passage and preaches a pressurized message inviting the listener to self-initiate some kind of moral transformation, then the text has been abused and the message of the Bible corrupted. If the preacher fails to effectively engage the bigger story of Scripture, then the particular passage could be mishandled in light of its whole Bible context.

Big story folks focus on the full history of God’s redemptive plan, but this cannot guarantee immunity from moralistic preaching, nor does it always generate accurate handling of the text. If the preacher imposes fanciful shortcuts to get to the goal of the rest of the redemption story, then it may seem like the text before the listeners may be turned into a secret code that only the preacher can unravel. When big story preaching does not handle each text carefully, it can have the effect of flattening the Bible so that every passage is essentially a vague reflection of the one big story that will get imposed on it by the preacher. And even when the redemption plan is laid out, how easily moralism can creep in via pressure to choose belief as our great work.

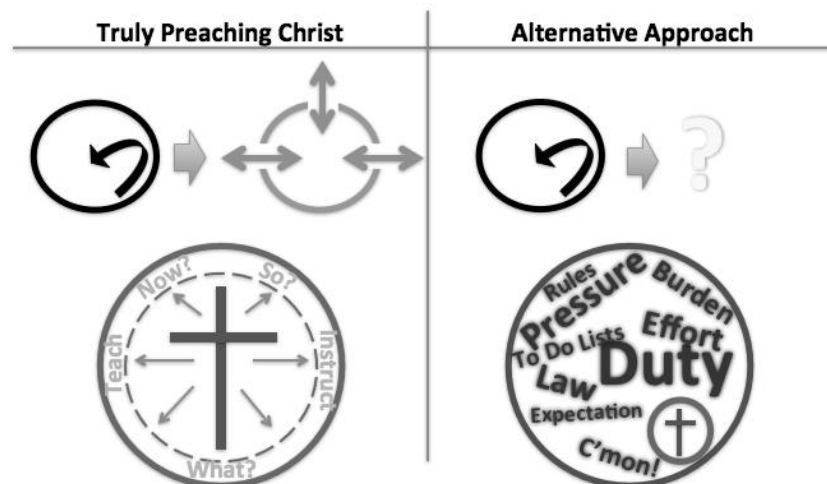
Both schools of thought have a lot to offer and I would thoroughly recommend you read the best books in both groups. But whichever camp you choose to set up your homiletical tent in, be sure to benefit from what is good about the other group too.

III. What Does It Mean To “Preach Christ?” What Is The Alternative?

Human: Two Options



Preaching: Two Options



IV. Redemptive Preaching

A. The Redemptive Context of Scripture

1. Everything is written after Genesis 3
2. Everything is written after Genesis 3:15

B. We must develop sensitivity to the Fallen Condition Focus

Bryan Chapell uses the label of “Fallen Condition Focus” to point to that aspect of fallenness that is to be found in every passage of Scripture. Haddon Robinson (Big Idea School) would use the language of “Depravity Factor” to describe the same thing.

In every passage we should be able to recognize the influence of the Fall, and consequently the scope for redemption from God. As Chapell might put it, “where do we see God doing for sinners what they cannot do for themselves?”

When we learn to identify the FCF or DF in a passage, we are well on our way to finding a connection point to our lives. Spotting the negative will allow us to offer the positive hope that only comes from God. There is hope for sinners, and that hope can be preached from every page of Scripture.

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