

Probing the Technicalities of Preaching Narrative

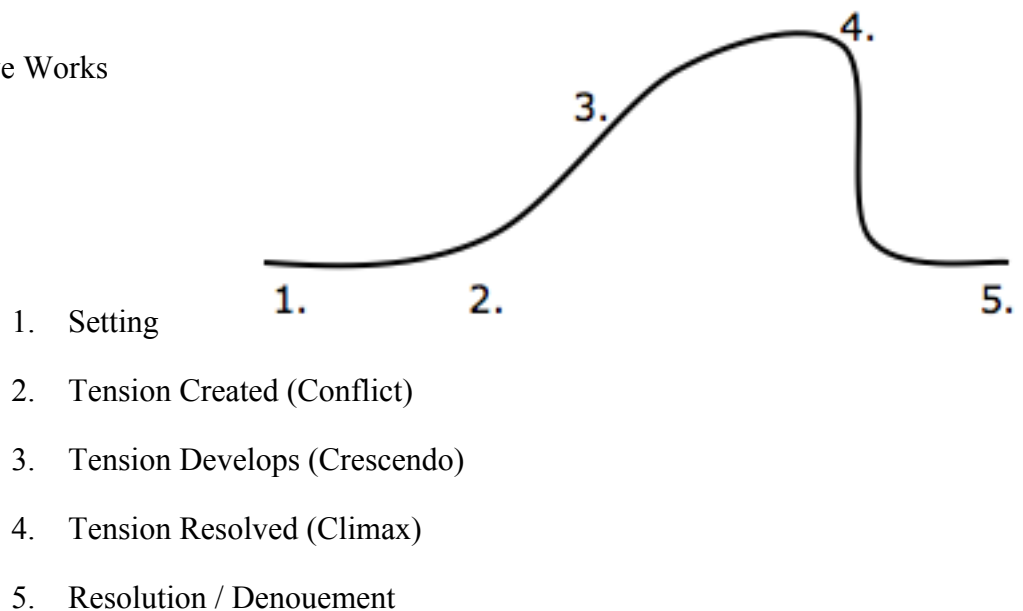
As the most used type of literature in the canon, narrative is often treated as a genre for children. However, if we grasp the mechanics of the function of narrative, we can open up life changing preaching options all over the Bible. In this final session as the Advanced Network, we will seek to probe deeper into the way narrative works and the implications for our preaching of narrative texts.

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I. Narrative Defined

- A. “Biblical narrative can be defined as a historically accurate, artistically sophisticated account of persons and actions in a setting designed to reveal God and edify the reader.” (Jeffrey Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety*, p64)
- B. “A text is . . . an embodiment of an author’s intention, that is a strategy designed to carry out that intention.” (John Sailhamer, *Intro to OT Theology*, 46-47)
 1. Author’s intend to communicate ideas
 2. Author’s intend to influence readers
 3. The intention is to generate response

II. How Narrative Works



A. Plot – the “soul” of the story (Aristotle)

1. Highlight ideas
2. Create suspense through disequilibrium
3. Fulfill expectations

B. Character

Do we preach stories “with skin on” (i.e. get into the life and emotion of characters)

C. Setting

1. Do we know and convey cultural / geographic context
E.g., John 4 – male/female, Jew/Gentile, location of well, etc.
2. Well conveyed setting can ignite the imagination of listeners
3. Well conveyed setting can generate association by listeners

D. Point of View / Narrator

1. The preacher, like the narrator, controls the reader’s point of view
2. The preacher, like the narrator, can achieve collaboration with the listener (i.e. through irony where they are expected to supply what is missing)

III. 3rd Person and 1st Person Preaching

A. 3rd Person Preaching

1. Communicate the main idea (direct or implied)
2. Shape the plot (maintain momentum)
3. Build identification (take time in preparation & delivery)

B. 1st Person Preaching (as above, plus)

1. Costume? (Simple & professional, or nothing)
2. Who is speaking?
3. When is he speaking?
4. Introduction & conclusion are vital

C. Either way: empathize with character and “see it” then the listener will too

IV. Say What it Says, and Do What it Does?

A. Vocabulary

B. Sermonic Mood

1. Read the text effectively
2. “Suspend the story” (underline inherent tension and connect to listeners)

C. Sermonic Movement