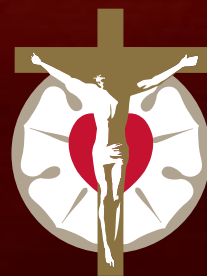
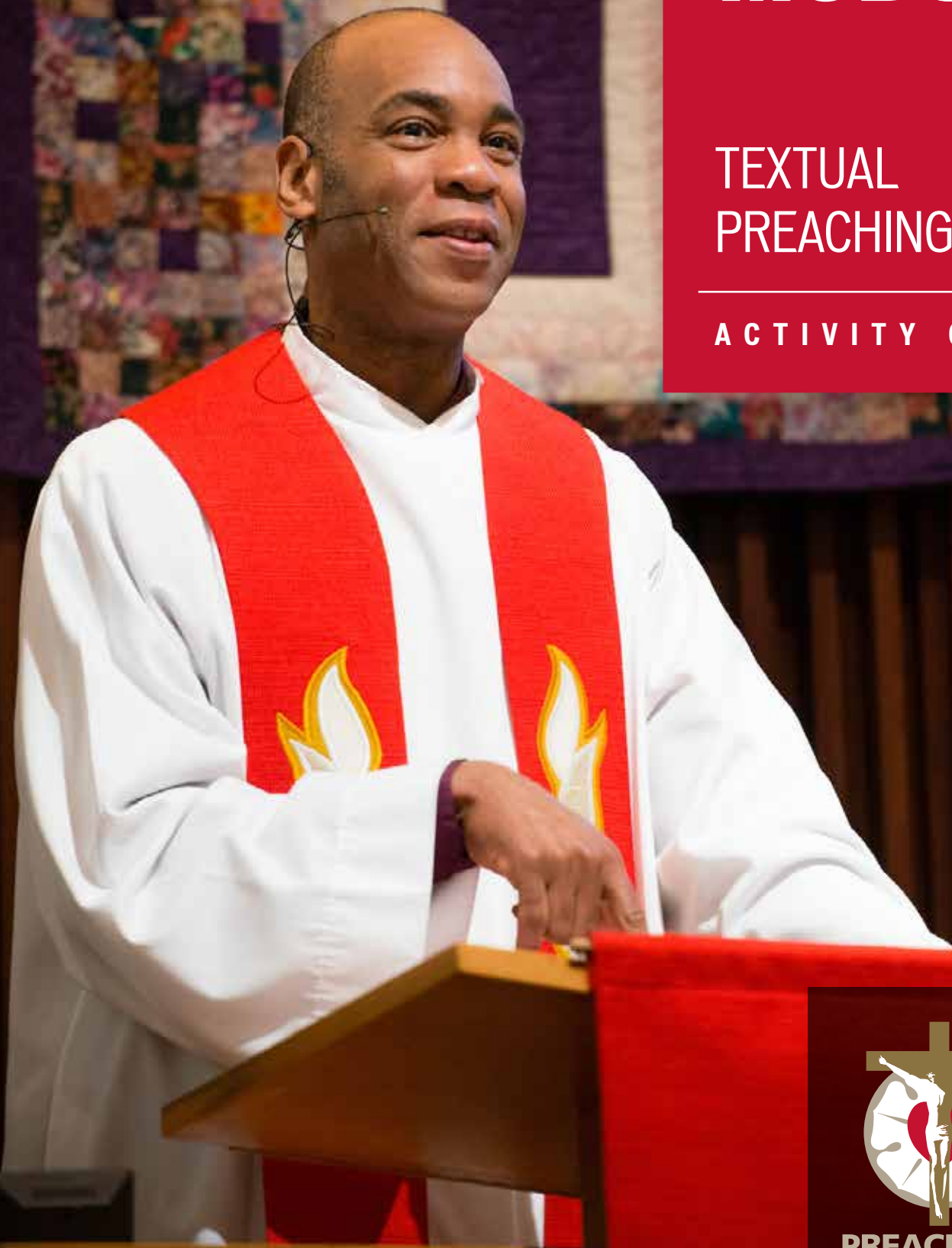


# MODULE 2

## TEXTUAL PREACHING

### ACTIVITY GUIDE



PREACH THE  
**WORD**  
It's *Still* All About  
**Jesus**

## Introduction:

Most preachers consider themselves textual preachers. After all, if their sermons are based on a biblical text, their preaching must be textual. This broad definition of textual preaching can cover everything from a sermon which works the text word for word to a sermon that becomes topical as soon as the text has been read, leaving the biblical text behind. It's no secret that both self-critical pastors and observant listeners are sometimes left wondering, even early in a sermon, "What happened to the text?"

The objective for this study is an intentional and thorough use of the biblical text in preaching. For this purpose the following working definition of textual preaching will shape your conversations:

Textual preaching engages a biblical text to the extent that the text itself drives the preparation, structure, content, and texture of the sermon.

The first and best place to look for what we need in preparing, structuring, voicing and coloring a sermon is the biblical text itself.

## Phase 1:

### TRIAD MEETING – OPENING REFLECTIONS ON THE TOPIC

In the first meeting of the triad, you will watch the module's video segments and converse about textual preaching.

### 1.1 CONFESSION AND CHRISTO-CENTRICITY

**A. General description:** The practice of preaching or teaching from the written Word of God, the Bible, goes back at least to synagogue practices before Christ. When Jesus first preached in Nazareth, He was handed the scroll of Isaiah, and it was assumed that whatever He had to say would take its authority and content from that specific Word of God (Luke 4:16–22). This is no small assumption and suggests a more intentional use of the biblical text in our preaching.

**B. Module materials:** This section of the module introduces the working definition of textual preaching and how textual preaching addresses challenges preachers face as they work with a biblical text.

### Theology: Video segment 1 and group discussion

Before viewing Video Segment 1, read through the following, which sets a theological platform for an affirmation of the inherent authority and power in the biblical text.

In his book, *Preaching*, Timothy Keller makes a strong case for textual preaching, especially expository preaching. One of his arguments states that "a careful expository sermon makes it easier for the hearers to recognize that the authority of the sermon rests not in the speaker's opinions or reasoning but in God, in his revelation in the text itself."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 36.

Preaching finds its authority and power in the written Word of God. That authority is more than the static authority of office. A pastor's sermon has authority because it is inexorably wedded to the text of the Scriptures, the very Word of God. This authoritative written source of sermons possesses dynamic, transforming power to bring people to saving faith and to shape what they think and how they live (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

In an essay titled, “The Power of God's Word,” written over 50 years ago, sainted theologian and seminary President Robert Preus uses the following trinitarian argument to explain the dynamic power of the written and spoken Word:

- 1) The written and spoken Word draws its energy and authority from its author, who is God. Although men wrote the Scriptures, these writings are nevertheless God's Word, God's utterances (Rom. 2:2), the product of His breath (Matt. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:16).
- 2) The written and spoken Word draws its power from its content, Christ. The power of the Word is not some stern and irresistible force which coerces the human will and intellect of its victim into obedience. It is an almighty power, but is gentle and persuasive, working always through a dianoetic message, the message of a crucified and risen Savior. It is the Gospel of Christ which is powerful.
- 3) The written and spoken Word draws its power from its union with the Holy Spirit, who is always operative through it. The Word of God and the Spirit of God are inseparable. When the Word is preached the Spirit is always operative.<sup>2</sup>

Notice how Preus in all three cases speaks of “the written and spoken Word” in the same breath. It is clear that the power of a sermon to shape faith and life is drawn from its intentional connection to the written Scriptures. Both the written and spoken Word carry the authoritative power of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but the spoken Word has a derived power, inseparable from its source, the written Word.

All of this bears on this study's encouragement that textual preachers engage the biblical text in the preparation, structure, content and texture of their sermon. This written Word, which shapes our preaching, is much more than print on paper. It includes the thoughts, images, emotions and actions of God at work in both preacher and hearer. Both *dabar* in the Old Testament and *logos* in the New Testament present the “Word” as a multi-faceted, personal and powerful divine communication.

Video Segment 1 introduces the working definition of textual preaching as preaching which “engages a biblical text to the extent that the text itself drives the preparation, structure, content and texture of the sermon.”

Video Segment 1 also suggests four challenges addressed by stronger, more intentional textual preaching. Failure to address these challenges can result in the biblical text not being heard or understood in a sermon. These four challenges are summarized here:

- 1) We move too quickly to topical preaching without allowing the specific biblical text to speak.
- 2) We impose a rhetorical sermon structure on a biblical text that does not allow the text to be heard or dilutes the text's own structure.
- 3) We assume our hearers have a working acquaintance with the text, failing to honor the specific storyline or content of the text in our preaching.
- 4) We and our listeners misplace the authority and power of our preaching in the preacher's office or skills rather than in the biblical text.

**Watch Video Segment 1.**

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Preus, “The Power of God's Word,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 34, no. 8 (1963): 463–65.

## Discussion:

- 1) Briefly describe how you usually work with a text while preparing a sermon.
- 2) Which of these two approaches to a sermon are you more likely to take?
  - a. Working with the specific language and moves inside a biblical text
  - b. Moving quickly off a textual cue into a topical sermon, such as faith or hopeGive an example from a recent sermon where you did one or the other.
- 3) What do you think is behind a preacher's decision to impose an outside structure on a text rather than simply unfold the text as it flows? Discuss the benefits of creative sermon structures as well as the dangers in their use.
- 4) How important is it that your listeners know the biblical text when you have finished preaching? Explain your response.
- 5) Do you think your listeners hear your preaching as the Word of God or as your own words? Or somehow both? Explain your response.
- 6) Since all preaching involves rhetoric, what skills do you use and how do you use them to honor the power of God's Word in preaching?
- 7) To what extent do your rhetorical skills affect the power of your sermons?

## Theory: Video segment 2 and group discussion

Video Segment 2 considers fully engaging the biblical text in sermon preparation. As you view this segment keep in mind your own preaching and what you can do to ensure that the biblical text permeates your preparatory work.

What follows is a guide as you view this video segment.

Watch Video Segment #2.

## Aspects of preparation

"Eating the Scroll"

- 1) Read the text aloud.
- 2) Bring my needs to the text, and pray the language of the text back to God with my own needs in mind.
- 3) Contemplate the text with my hearers in mind.
- 4) Live in the text, asking these questions:
  - What language in the text, especially visual language, provides great freight for preaching?
  - How does the text move, and what does this suggest for the structure and movement of my sermon?
  - Where do I see a Law/Gospel, sin/grace dynamic in the text?
  - In what way(s) is Jesus Christ central in this text?
- 5) Ask of the text, "What central meaning of this text provides a homiletical center for my sermon?"
- 6) Ask of the text, "What stories (analogies, examples and metaphors) come to mind as I contemplate this text?"

- 7) Ask of the text, “What does the mood of this text or the variety of moods suggest for my preaching?”
- 8) Ask of the text, “What parallel biblical texts support this text and its meaning(s)?”

### Discussion:

- 1) Share with your group your typical routine in preparing a sermon.
- 2) How intentional are you in helping your listeners visualize a text in their imagination? Recall a sermon in which you worked to use textual imagery.
- 3) How transparently do you share in your preaching how a biblical text has spoken directly to your needs in sermon preparation? How often does your personal “eating of the scroll” actually make it into your preaching? Discuss how appropriate such personal transparency is in preaching a biblical text — its strengths and its dangers.
- 4) Each group member is invited to identify a biblical text where the moods within the text are significant for preaching. It might be the text on which you base your sermon for this module. Then, each group member reads aloud the text he has chosen, reflecting the moods in his voice.
- 5) Where do you see opportunities for increased engagement of the biblical text in your sermon preparation? Based on the suggestions above, what would you change? What would you add? What would you delete?

### Theory: Video segment 3 and group discussion

Video Segment 3 addresses three remaining aspects of textual preaching: structure, content and texture. A viewing guide is provided here.

Watch Video Segment #3.

### Textual preaching and sermon structures

This sampler of textual sermon structures shows how the biblical text itself can shape the moves of a sermon:

- 1) Running the text (word by word; phrase by phrase; verse by verse; paragraph by paragraph);
- 2) Text interrupted;
- 3) Text delayed;
- 4) Text framed;
- 5) Text imaged;
- 6) Scene change;
- 7) Character perspective; and
- 8) Text plus application

### Discussion:

- 1) In addition to these textual structures, what other structures have you seen inherent in biblical texts? For example, what structure(s) do you see in Jesus’ parables, suggesting a sermon’s shape and flow?
- 2) In textual preaching, a sermon either feels like a Bible study or it simply reflects the flow of the text. Question one suggests that the literary form of a text may suggest a structure for the sermon. Choose a rhetorical form of a text and consider how a sermon might

be similar to and different from that rhetorical form. For example, how is a sermon similar to and different from a psalm, a proverb, a narrative, a parable, a letter, a judgment oracle, etc.? What implications does that have for preaching?”

- 3) Are you more likely to impose a rhetorical structure on a text or to let the text’s movement shape your sermon? Explain why you may favor one over the other.
- 4) What is good about using a Law/Gospel sermon structure with every text? What is the down side of such a practice?
- 5) Try to recall one of your sermons (like Martin Franzmann’s referenced in the video) which you intentionally structured by simply dividing the text into its inherent components. Why do you think listeners often respond well to such simply structured textual sermons?

### **Textual preaching and sermon content**

Video Segment 3 suggests three ways the preacher can actively engage the biblical text in the content of a sermon:

- 1) Use the language of the text throughout the sermon.
- 2) Find a refrain or textual hook to bring the hearer repeatedly back to the text.
- 3) Go first to the text for the articulation of the sermon’s Law and Gospel. Avoid tag-on and rote Law/Gospel.

### **Discussion:**

- 1) Explain why a preacher, early in a sermon, might leave behind the language of a biblical text.
- 2) Have you ever used a textual refrain? Traditional African-American preachers have often used this device to bring listeners back to the biblical text. Suggest a lectionary text which seems ideal for the use of a refrain in preaching. What is the refrain you would use for this text, and why?
- 3) What role does the biblical text play in the Law and Gospel proclamation of your sermon? How does that work itself out in your sermon preparation and preaching?
- 4) Recall a recent sermon when your personal “eating of the scroll” in preparation clearly impacted the sermon’s content. How did you communicate this?

### **Textual preaching and sermon texture**

Sermon texture refers to the moods, color and enhancements of a sermon. Here, too, textual preachers will want to enhance and even embody the biblical text as they pay attention to following:

- 1) Mood;
- 2) Intensity;
- 3) Images;
- 4) Story; and
- 5) Integrity (Ethos)

### **Discussion:**

- 1) What usually “colors” your sermons? That is, what do you most often do to give your sermons depth and texture?
- 2) How intentional are you to ensure that your sermon’s color and texture are clearly related to your text?
- 3) How do preachers communicate that they, personally, believe what the biblical text says?



## Sample sermon: Video Segment 4 and discussion

In this segment you will get a glimpse of textual preaching in practice. You will view a sermon, titled, “Red = White?” preached by the Rev. William E. Mueller, pastor, Suburban Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind. The text for the sermon is Rev. 7:9–17, especially v 14. Note that the sermon was preached on All Saints Sunday, Nov. 6, 2016, in the Worship for Shut-Ins series produced in Fort Wayne, Ind. Shut-ins, therefore, comprise the majority of Pastor Mueller’s listeners. The teaser for the sermon offers this: “God says some surprising things in His Word. We have a prime example in Revelation 7 where we discover that red = white. How does God encourage us — and change our outlook — by this weird color transformation?”

You may access the sermon at [vimeo.com/185949778](https://vimeo.com/185949778). Use the questions provided to guide your follow-up discussion.

### Discussion:

- 1) What specific techniques does the preacher use to keep his text engaged throughout the sermon?
- 2) Does the language of the text shape the Law and Gospel of the sermon?
- 3) Is it clear how the sermon’s enhancements relate to the text? Do they eclipse or amplify the text?
- 4) What is the benefit of focusing on just one image from the text vs. working several textual images?
- 5) What could the preacher have done to engage the text more fully?

Note that the above questions are worth asking of every sermon as we seek to serve the biblical text in our preaching.

## 1.2 COMPETENCY

**A. General description:** Having looked at textual preaching both theologically and theoretically, this section provides resources and exercises to develop and evaluate your competency as a textual preacher.

**B. Module materials:** Provided here are resources to help you evaluate and sharpen your intentional engagement of the biblical text in your preaching.

### Evaluation

#### Checklist for textual preachers

The following checklist can help preachers fully engage the biblical text while also allowing for creativity and variety in their sermons:

	My sermon preparation includes personally living inside my biblical text.
	My sermon structure complements the movement and structure of the text.
	The language and images of the text permeate my sermon’s content.
	My sermon’s color and texture enhance the biblical text rather than eclipse it.
	I find my sermon’s language for Law and Gospel in the text or a related parallel text.
	My mood and intensity as preacher reflect the mood and intensity of the text.
	I engage the biblical text to the extent that hearers will remember it.

## Exercises for skill acquisition

**1. Paraphrasing** A helpful exercise in preparing a sermon is to read the biblical text aloud several times, listening for its flow and nuances, and then paraphrase the text as if God is speaking directly to you or to your congregation. Often the language and direction of the sermon can be discovered in these paraphrases.

Each member of your group is invited to practice this exercise by reading aloud a biblical text and then writing down a brief paraphrase of the text with God as the speaker. Then read your paraphrase to your colleagues and, as a group, respond to these questions:

- How many different thoughts comprise my paraphrase?
- What connects these thoughts?
- Which of these thoughts seems central to the biblical text?
- What language (words, phrases, transitions, etc.) does my paraphrase suggest for my sermon?
- What does this paraphrase tell me about God or Christ?

Evaluate with one another the value of paraphrasing for textual preaching.

## 2. Practicing text-driven sermon structures

This module offers a sampler of eight textual sermon structures:

- 1) Running the text (word by word; phrase by phrase; verse by verse; paragraph by paragraph explanation of the text);
- 2) Text interrupted (stopping at pivotal points of meaning for explanation and application);
- 3) Text delayed (working the text after an introductory story or perspective);
- 4) Text framed (framing the text with a story at the beginning of the sermon which is resolved or concluded after working the text);
- 5) Text imaged (working an image or images in the text to unfold the meaning of the text);
- 6) Textual scene change (move through the text scene by scene or location by location)
- 7) Textual character perspective (work the text from the perspective of its different characters); and
- 8) Text plus application (explain the meaning of the text and then apply it to the hearers' lives)

Each member of your group is invited to choose one of the lectionary texts below and share with your colleagues your first thoughts on how you would structure a sermon on this text, using one of the eight text-driven structures. How would your sermon flow as you seek optimum exposure of one of these biblical texts?

- 1 Kings 19:1–8
- Isaiah 35:1–10
- Job 38:1–11
- Romans 3:21–28
- Ephesians 6:10–20
- Philippians 2:5–11



- Matthew 20:1–16
- Mark 2:1–12
- John 20:1–18

### 3. Rhetorical skills and textual preaching

Textual preaching emphasizes the inherent power of the biblical text to reach the hearers' minds and hearts. That's why we stay with the text — it transforms people's lives! This may question, however, the value of a creative, well-presented sermon.

Read aloud this quote from Richard Lischer, describing his early sermons:

Like most preachers I grossly overestimated the importance of my part in the sermon. When I thought of preaching, I did not consider it to be a congregation's reception of the word of God, but a speaker's command of the Bible's hidden meanings and applications, which were served up in a way to showcase the authority and skill of the preacher. In those days the gospel lived or died by my personal performance. My preaching was a small cloud of glory that followed me around and hung like a canopy over the pulpit whenever I occupied it. How ludicrous I must have appeared to my congregation.<sup>3</sup>

### Discussion:

- Humility in preaching is more than a virtue. It is a skill integral to the practice of proclamation. As you look at your preaching, how has your ego at times been an obstacle to your listeners hearing the biblical text?
- At the same time, how can a lack of rhetorical prowess obscure a biblical text for the listener? What can a preacher do or fail to do which may result in diminishing the power of the biblical text?
- Discuss the following comment: "If the Word of God is so powerful, why even have a sermon? Why not just read the Scriptures and leave it at that? That way, we have the mood, structure and everything else of the text and God can work through His Word without any hindrance."
- What does it mean to you to be humble before the Word in your preaching?

## 1.3 CONGREGATIONAL CONTEXT

**A. General description:** God has called you to preach the Word in a specific setting with specific people. You need to know how they think, what they value and what they need to hear next weekend. Vital to textual preaching is your awareness of your listeners' lives.

**B. Module materials:** This section contains two exercises. The first exercise invites each of you to describe your listeners and their context. The second exercise prepares you to use what you have learned in your own preaching context.

### Exercise 1: My listeners

In this exercise each of you will describe your listeners. You already know your listeners (and may have described them already in a previous module of *Preach the Word*). You are their shepherd. You are at their side at the highest, lowest and in between moments of their lives. Crucial in the discussion will be your determination of how important textual preaching is to your parishioners.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Lischer, *Open Secrets* (New York: Broadway Books, 2001), 73.

## Directions

Preachers in your group take turns describing their listeners by responding to these questions:

- 1) What significant traits of your listeners are always present as you prepare and present a sermon?
- 2) Use three descriptive words to capture those who regularly listen to your sermons.
- 3) By your best reckoning, how important is it to your listeners that you keep your biblical text fully engaged throughout your sermon?
- 4) To what extent do your specific church and community determine your choice of a sermon text? Explain your response.

## Exercise 2: Preparing for your preaching context

This exercise offers discussion prompts as you prepare to create a sermon that fully engages the biblical text. Consider what you have learned from this module, how it relates to your skills as a preacher and to your congregational setting, and how you plan to use this learning in an upcoming sermon.

### Discussion:

- 1) **Learning:** Review what each of you has learned about textual preaching. What will you take into your preaching from this module?
- 2) **Personal skills:** What one specific practice or skill does each of you hope to develop in response to this module?
- 3) **Congregational setting:** Clarify with one another how each of your contexts impacts your textual preaching.
- 4) **Appropriate action:** In an immediate sense, what aspect of textual preaching do you hope to put to work in the sermon you develop for this module?

## FOR THE NEXT STEPS

Determine within your group your plans for viewing the sermons you will record in your congregations. Will they be viewed together at your next meeting or viewed by each of you in advance? (Instructions for uploading sermons to facilitate viewing in advance are given in the following section.) Be sure the host site of the next meeting has the technology you need.

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR FURTHER STUDY

If you want to pursue further study on textual preaching, the following books may be helpful:

Keller, Timothy. *Preaching: Communicating the Faith in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Viking Press, 2015 (especially pp. 27–46).

Keller places textual preaching in its historical context and emphasizes the value and appeal of expository preaching.

Long, Thomas G. *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.

This little book looks at the implications of the specific literary form of a text for preaching. As exegetes continue to live in the biblical text we may find this variety of literary forms even more instructive for our preaching.

MacArthur, John, Jr., Mayhue, Richard L., et.al. *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*. Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1992.

Seasoned practitioners of expository preaching reintroduce readers to its Biblical moorings and homiletical strengths.

## Phase 2:

### PASTORAL PRACTICE: PREACHING AND RESPONSE IN THE CONGREGATIONAL SETTING

After the first meeting of the triad, you will put what you have learned into practice in a sermon. Each pastor will preach a sermon that uses what he has learned in this module and engage in some form of feedback with congregational members. The sermon will be recorded so that it can be uploaded and discussed in the second meeting of the triad.

#### 2.1 PREACHING AND RESPONSE

**A. General description:** You will now preach a sermon using what you have learned about textual preaching in a way that is appropriate for your congregation. In addition to preaching the sermon, you will converse with members of your congregation using one of the exercises provided.

Since the sermon will also be used in the next meeting of your group, make provisions for recording the sermon so that it can be uploaded and viewed by members of the triad.

**B. Module materials:** In this section, you will choose one of three options for facilitating conversations with your members about textual preaching. The first option guides a post-sermon conversation with your members through a simple response form. The second exercise facilitates learning and discussion with your members before and after the sermon. The third exercise uses a wrap-around blog model to invite participation before and after the sermon.

Choose one of these exercises or create your own exercise to guide interaction with your members in relation to the sermon.

#### Exercise 1: Post-sermon conversation

**Group selection:** Identify five or six members of the congregation who will meet with you after the sermon and discuss textual preaching. You may choose to offer an open invitation for members to participate in this exercise or you may select the members by personally inviting them. When selecting members, you may think about working with particular groups of people in the congregation (e.g., the elders, the confirmands, the new member class, etc.).

**Listener reflection:** Ask the members participating in the exercise to listen to the sermon and, after reflecting on it, write out answers to questions you have given them. You may either draw up your own list of questions or use the questions below as a guide.

**Group discussion:** Meet with the members and proceed through the questions as you guide group discussion about stories in preaching.

Remember that demonstrating a spirit of openness to feedback and gratitude for your members who are participating in this exercise will encourage honest and helpful feedback.

## Sample response sheet

Please answer the following questions regarding the sermon:

- 1) By the time the sermon was over, how well did you know the sermon's biblical text?  
How important is that to you?
- 2) What is most significant to you as a pastor prepares and presents his sermons?  
Explain your response.
- 3) What did the pastor do in his sermon to keep the biblical text of his sermon engaged throughout?
- 4) What would you like me as a preacher to know as you consider the role of the biblical text in my preaching?

## Exercise 2: Conversations before and after the sermon

**Group selection:** Identify five or six members of the congregation who will interact with you before and after the sermon to discuss textual preaching. You may choose to offer an open invitation for members to participate in this exercise or you may select the members by personally inviting them. When selecting members, you may think about working with particular groups of people in the congregation (e.g., the elders, the confirmands, the new member class, etc.).

**Pre-sermon conversation:** Meet with the members at some point before you preach the sermon. In this meeting take time to help the members learn about textual preaching and to process their reflections on how this topic relates to their congregational context.

**Learning about the topic:** For learning about textual preaching, you may want to share with the members some of the module materials you have found most helpful concerning this topic. This way, the congregational members grow in their understanding of textual preaching even as they participate with you in this project.

**Reflecting on their experience of the topic:** For processing reflections about textual preaching, you may want to show the sample sermon from the module and discuss it or ask a few simple questions and give the members time to talk about their own experiences of textual preaching or the lack of it.

**Listener reflection:** Ask the members participating in the exercise to listen to the sermon and then, after reflecting on it, meet with you for more discussion. You may draw up a list of questions for them to consider or use the questions above.

**Post-sermon conversation:** Meet with the members and discuss their response to your use of textual preaching. Open the meeting by reflecting on what you learned and discussed in your pre-sermon conversation. This calls to mind the assumptions and skills necessary for textual preaching and the particular emphases appropriate to this congregation.

After this review, invite open discussion of their experience of the sermon. If needed, you may begin the conversation by naming a specific skill or emphasis and asking how it was addressed in the sermon. Or, if you have drawn up a list of questions for them to answer, proceed through the questions as you guide group discussion. Remember that demonstrating a spirit of openness to feedback and gratitude for your members who are participating in this exercise will encourage honest and helpful feedback.

## Exercise 3: Wrap-around blog model

**Group selection:** Identify several members of the congregation who will participate in a blog on textual preaching. You may choose to offer an open invitation for members to participate in this exercise or you may select the members by personally inviting them. If you select members, you

may think about working with particular groups of people in the congregation (e.g., the elders, the confirmands, the new member class, etc.).

**Pre-sermon activity:** Create a blog post that invites participants into your sermon preparation process as you plan a sermon deeply rooted in and shaped by its biblical text. Your post might include the following:

- A statement on the value and power of keeping the biblical text engaged throughout a sermon;
- Some thoughts on how your preaching might change, even in a single way, because of your commitment to being a stronger textual preacher;
- What you plan to do in the sermon they will view to be sure the biblical text is heard, understood and filled of meaning; and
- A request that your listeners read and meditate on your sermon text and pray the text back to God, considering their own needs.

You might also ask for initial responses to your post, which may actually prove helpful as you prepare the sermon.

**Sermon formation:** Prepare your sermon, keeping in mind your post and the responses of your parishioners in mind.

**Listener reflection:** Ask the members participating in the exercise to view the sermon and then, after reflecting on it, meet with you for more discussion.

**Post-sermon conversation:** Meet face to face with the blog participants to discuss their response to textual preaching as it relates to your sermon. You may use the following questions to guide the discussion:

- 1) How did meditating on the text and praying the text prepare you for the sermon?
- 2) How well did the preacher accomplish his goals as presented on his post? Explain your response.
- 3) What did the preacher do in his sermon to keep the biblical text of his sermon engaged throughout?
- 4) By the time the sermon was over, how familiar were you with the sermon's biblical text? How important is that to you?
- 5) What is most significant to you as a pastor prepares and presents his sermon? Explain your response.
- 6) What would you like me as a preacher to know as you consider the role of the biblical text in my preaching?

Remember that demonstrating a spirit of openness to feedback and gratitude for your members who are participating in this exercise will encourage honest and helpful feedback.

## 2.2 UPLOADING THE SERMON

**A. General description:** Before the next meeting of the triad, you may wish to upload a video of your sermon to the internet so that it can be watched prior to the meeting by the other members of your group. You may also choose to email them the manuscript of the sermon.

**B. Module materials:** Before you preach the sermon, make a test video recording of yourself in the preaching space. This will enable you to make any adjustments to lighting, sound and visual representation so that the video recording of the sermon is of excellent quality.

After recording the sermon, upload the video for use by the members of your group. If you do not have a church website to which you are uploading the video, you may use either YouTube or Vimeo.

If you want your video to remain private, you may use the privacy settings in YouTube or password protect the video in Vimeo. For more information about uploading videos for private viewing, see the video-based instructions readily available upon an internet search for “how do I upload a private video to YouTube?” or “How do I password protect a video on Vimeo?”

## Phase 3:

### TRIAD MEETING–REFLECTIONS ON YOUR PRACTICE OF TEXTUAL PREACHING

The second meeting of the triad completes the practice-reflection model of learning. You will watch one another’s sermons, reflect with one another on your practice of textual preaching and consider how to continue to grow in this area.

#### 3.1 WATCHING THE SERMONS

**A. General description:** Depending on the preference of the group, the videos may be watched before the group meets, or you may watch the sermons together as a group. Pastors will view the sermons and converse about how they more intentionally tried to keep the biblical text engaged throughout their sermon.

If the videos are to be viewed prior to the meeting, each pastor will upload a video of his sermon to the internet so that it may be viewed in advance.

**B. Module materials:** In this section, you will find three exercises that prepare you for reflecting with the preachers in your group on their use of techniques of textual preaching. You may use one of these exercises or create your own form of response.

#### Exercise 1: Assessment through discussion and checklist

- 1) Watch the video of the sermon.
- 2) Identify what the preacher did well to keep the biblical text engaged throughout the sermon.
- 3) Use the “Checklist for textual preachers” as an assessment tool with a readiness to discuss with the preacher what he did well and what could have been done differently or better. Be gentle.  
(page \_\_\_\_ of this guide)

#### Exercise 2: Assessment through guided reflection

- 1) View the video of the sermon.
- 2) Identify one move made by the preacher in the sermon which really served to keep the biblical text engaged in the sermon.
- 3) Make a list of other moves by the preacher which helped to honor and amplify the language and movement of the biblical text.
- 4) Suggest what more could have been done to fully engage the biblical text in the sermon.

#### Exercise 3: Assessment through solicited feedback

- 1) Before viewing the sermon, contact that preacher and ask if there are any specific questions he would like you to consider when reflecting on his preaching.

- 2) View the video of the sermon.
- 3) Answer the questions provided by the preacher. Be sure to use concrete examples from specific moments in the sermon to support your responses.

### 3.2 PASTORAL CONVERSATION:

**A. General description:** After viewing the sermons, you will engage in pastoral conversation with members of your group. Each member should have the opportunity to have his sermon processed by the group.

There are three purposes to this conversation:

- 1) To assess how effectively the sermon employed the tenets and practices of textual preaching;
- 2) To process the congregational response to the sermon as textual preaching; and
- 3) To consider how to improve this aspect of preaching in the future.

**B. Module materials:** After viewing the sermon, the members of the triad will reflect with the preacher on his use of stories in preaching.

For each preacher, the following process might be used to guide the conversation:

- 1) Preacher's reflections: The preacher whose sermon is being discussed begins the conversation. He introduces the sermon by describing how he intentionally tried to include elements of textual preaching in his sermon. He identifies what he felt were his strengths and weaknesses in this aspect of preaching. He might show clips from the sermon for discussion.
- 2) Triad's response: The other members of the group enter the conversation when appropriate to affirm or clarify the self-evaluation of the preacher and to share their observations and insights about the preacher's effective engagement of the biblical text in his sermon.
- 3) Preacher's summary of congregational reflection: The preacher summarizes the experience of conversing with the congregation, identifying (1) what he learned about his preaching context and (2) how the congregation responded to his intentional attempt at more effective textual preaching.
- 4) Preacher's plan for future growth: The conversation next looks to the future with the preacher and the members of the group identifying strengths that the preacher brings to the task of textual preaching. The preacher then shares his plan for continued improvement in textual preaching. What will he change, amplify or delete from his practice so that the text is more readily heard and received by his hearers?
- 5) Prayer: The preachers in the group conclude by praying for one another's textual preaching. Prayers may focus on the needs and commitments expressed in their conversation.

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