

Preaching as Pilgrimage





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INTRODUCTION

This video, which includes a workbook for group discussion, helps pastors consider two types of experiences in the sermon: moments of meditation and moments of movement. By identifying these two basic experiences, pastors will strengthen their ability to communicate ideas using different modalities of learning and to organize the sermon using different sermon structures.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Every preacher has faced the challenge of trying to figure out how to communicate an idea to his congregation. Simply stating an idea, such as, “Jesus rules at God’s right hand” or “you shall not covet,” does not mean that people understand that idea, much less care about it.

A. We are accustomed to communicating ideas in writing and in casual conversation. Preaching, however, is different. What are some of the reasons it is harder to communicate ideas in preaching than it is in writing or casual conversation?

B. What are some of the techniques you use to communicate your ideas in a sermon? Why are these techniques helpful in leading people to understand and to care about what you are communicating?

C. What techniques have you found to be less effective or actually confusing for your people in preaching? Why?



SESSION ONE

Homiletical Theory - The Pilgrimage of Preaching

This video segment communicates the basic idea that the sermon is a sacred shaping of experience. Using the analogy of a pilgrimage, one can identify two basic experiences that occur in every sermon: moments of meditation and moments of movement.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As preachers, we are given the gift of time. How do we use that time in preaching? What experiences do we evoke in the sermon and how do we order those ideas and experiences?

One way of answering these questions is to think about the sermon as a pilgrimage. In the sermon, the preacher guides God's people on a pilgrimage that is holy and life changing. People are led deeper into moments of meditation upon spiritually significant truths and people are led onward through moments of movement toward a spiritually significant end.

Two tasks are thus crucial for the preacher: developing moments of meditation and organizing those moments in a purposeful way. Our questions will explore these two tasks.

A. Moments of Meditation

Read the definition of a moment of meditation on the handout ("Moments of Meditation") and the various ways in which these moments are developed by a preacher.

1. Which of these methods are you most familiar with? What do you like about that particular method? What are some difficulties you have encountered in using that method? How do you handle those difficulties?

2. Choose a particular idea and brainstorm various ways to develop that idea using these different methods of development. So, for example, take the idea "Christians love one another" or the idea "Christians live in hope" and brainstorm different ways of helping people understand and care about that idea using narration, serial depiction, image, character, dialogue or explanation.

3. If possible, consider a sermon you recently preached and try to identify one rhetorical unit in that sermon (sometimes, the easiest rhetorical units to identify are the introduction or the conclusion). Name the main idea you were communicating in that rhetorical unit and the method of development you were using to communicate that idea.

Why did you choose that method of development? In what ways did it help your people understand the main idea (head) and



care about it (heart)? Are there ways in which that rhetorical unit could have been developed more effectively?

2. What are struggles you have with this aspect of preaching? Brainstorm with the group various ways in which you might approach those struggles.

B. Moments of Movement (Sermon Structures)

Read the definition of a sermon structure on the handout (“Moments of Movement”) and consider the various ways in which preachers structure their sermons. If you want, you can consider the fuller explanation of various sermon structures listed on the website “The Pulpit” at www.concordiatheology.org (concordiatheology.org/sermon-structs/).

1. How do you arrive at a structure for your sermon? Even if you cannot name your sermon structure, how do you decide the order of your material? If possible, consider a recent sermon that you preached as an example.

3. Which structure comes most easily for you? What do you like about that particular structure that causes you to use it? What are some difficulties that could occur when using that structure? What do you do to prevent those problems in communication?

4. How would you go about using a different sermon structure in preaching? What structure would you choose? Why are you interested in using it?



SESSION TWO

Putting Theory into Practice - A Sample Sermon

This video segment demonstrates what this homiletical theory looks like in practice.

After describing a text (Acts 2:14a, 22-36) and a preaching situation (Concordia Seminary chapel), the video offers a sample sermon that puts the principles of development (moments of meditation) and structure (moments of movement) into practice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Sermons inspire conversations, especially among preachers. While there are many conversations one could have about this particular sermon (and feel free to have them), the purpose for including this sermon in this module is to think about two basic experiences that are present in every sermon: moments of movement (sermon structure) and moments of meditation (development).

A. Moments of Movement (Sermon Structure)

Moments of movement in a sermon are the very small transitional statements that the preacher makes to guide listeners from one point of the journey to another. Considered cumulatively, these moments of movement work together to form a very particular kind of journey and to give shape to the overall structure of the sermon.

Read the handout describing the structure used in this sermon (“Sermon Structure: Central Image – Single Focus”) and then consider the following questions related to that structure. For a fuller description of the central image sermon structure, see the

website “The Pulpit” at www.concordiatheology.org (concordiatheology.org/sermon-structs/dynamic/imagistic-structures/central-image/).

1. Our contemporary culture has been described as a visual culture. Would you agree or disagree with that assessment? Why? How are images used in our culture?

2. Throughout history, God has used images to communicate with his people. How are images used in Scripture? How have images been used in the church? In your congregation? In your sermons?

3. Having heard a sermon based on a central image, what are some values to having a central image in a sermon? What are some difficulties that could arise?

4. In a central image sermon structure, the image is often the most memorable portion of the sermon. For that reason, it is important to consider how that central image relates to the proclamation of Christ.

What aspects of Christ’s work were emphasized by this image? Discuss why that was or was not effective for you. What



aspects of Christ's work could have been emphasized more? How would you have done that in the sermon?

B. Moments of Meditation (Development)

Moments of development are the larger portions of the sermon, typically lasting from one to five minutes. Here the preacher identifies a single idea and develops it in a way that helps listeners understand the idea (head) and care about it (heart). Considered cumulatively, these moments of meditation work together to give the sermon texture, using a variety of modes of learning over the course of the whole sermon and cohering around a single topic or theme.

Consider the diagram of the sermon on the handout ("Sample Sermon: Acts 2:14a, 22-36") and use that diagram to discuss two distinctions: the distinction between inductive and deductive rhetorical units, and the distinction between various methods of development.

Deductive and Inductive Development

1. Moments of meditation can be classified as either deductive or inductive. A deductive moment of meditation is when the preacher clearly states the main idea of a rhetorical unit and then proceeds

to develop that idea for the listeners. An inductive moment of meditation is when the preacher slowly leads the listeners toward an idea that is finally stated at the end of the rhetorical unit.

Discuss deductive and inductive moments of meditation. What are their values? What are their challenges? How do you decide which method to use when you are preaching?

2. The rhetorical unit describing Peter as an empty vessel was an inductive rhetorical unit using the method of serial depiction. The unit began by considering Peter as the disciple who always had something to say and then ended with Peter as the disciple who had emptied himself of Jesus by denying him in the courtyard.

What was the value of using an inductive method of development for the idea that "Peter was an empty vessel"? How did that journey help you understand (head) and care about (heart) what it meant for Peter to be an empty vessel? What factors would help you decide whether to use an inductive or deductive method to develop this idea?



Various Methods of Development

Allow the group to discuss any of the rhetorical units of the sermon. Use both the diagram of the sermon and the handout describing various methods of development to aid your discussion.

In the discussion, identify the main idea of the rhetorical unit. Then, consider how well the method of development communicated that idea so that a seminary student would understand it (head) and care about it (heart). Here, the handout describing methods of development may help you in evaluating techniques used in development.

Finally, you may want to consider how you would communicate that idea with a different method of development and discuss which method of development you would use for your congregation and why. For your convenience, here is an example of how you could discuss the second rhetorical unit of the sermon.

Discussion example Rhetorical Unit 2 - Image

Main idea

A man makes music by touching his fingers to glass.

Method of development

Image

Evaluation (based on the handout description of image)

Image and Story

All images involve stories that lie in the background. Since that is the case, one of the struggles in working with an image is

communicating enough of the back story so that the image has meaning and yet not telling so much of the back story that the image gets lost and the rhetorical unit becomes a narrative instead.

In this particular rhetorical unit, the image is emphasized by clearly stating it at the opening of the rhetorical unit and by using gestures to help the hearers visualize the image.

Concrete and Poetic Language

All images involve both concrete and poetic language. Concrete language is used to convey a literal sense of the image. Poetic language is used at first to convey a literal sense of the image but then later to suggest a greater or deeper meaning.

In this particular image, the description of the setting used concrete language: the table, the glasses and the television show. The description of the musician making music, however, used poetic language.

The phrase “empty vessel” was used to describe the glass on the table but would later be used to describe people who were in need of God’s gracious work (Peter and the student). The word “sing” was used to describe the high note that the glass made but would later be used to describe the act of speaking for God (Peter in his sermon, the student in his sermon). The phrase “dipped his finger in water” was used to describe the literal action of the musician wetting his finger but would later be used to describe the gracious work of God (filling Peter with the Spirit, reassuring the student that he was baptized, proclaiming how God in Baptism has claimed us empty vessels for use in speaking His Word).

Perspective

All images are told from a particular perspective and that perspective helps listeners identify with the meaning of the image. In this particular case, the image is told from the perspective of a viewer who sees the image (a child lost in wonder).

That perspective is emphasized by small details describing what the child saw, what he was confused by, what he worried about and what he hoped for. By opening and closing with the experience of “a child being lost in wonder,” the image prepares the listeners for the conclusion of the sermon where God’s people are invited to be lost in wonder at the work that God does in their midst, enabling people to speak in His name.



SESSION THREE

Reflections on Practice – Common Challenges in Preaching

This video segment discusses four common challenges that relate to the use of development (moments of meditation) and structure (moments of movement) in preaching.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When one considers the sermon in terms of moments of meditation and moments of movement, there are common challenges that arise in preaching. In terms of moments of meditation, preachers can underdevelop or overdevelop an idea for the listeners. In terms of moments of movement, preachers can lack any purposeful order to the sermon or they can overuse a particular order to the point where the sermon becomes cliché and predictable.

A. Moments of Meditation (Development)

Sometimes, in preaching, we feel the pressure of time. It may be that an explanation of one word in the text seems to go on too long or it may be that we feel the need to shorten a story from everyday life.

1. As you look at your preaching, what do you tend to spend the most time on? Why?

2. What do you have the most difficulty spending time on or what are you most nervous about spending time on? Why?

3. For your congregation, which of the methods of development are easiest for your congregation to listen to and which are more difficult? Why?

4. When we prepare to communicate an idea in a sermon, we are faced with two basic questions: “What method of development should I use?” and “How much time should I spend on this idea?” What helps you determine the type and the length of a moment of meditation in your sermon?

B. Moments of Movement (Sermon Structures)

In preaching, some sermons seem to come together on their own, whereas others present us with more of a struggle. Selecting and then ordering the ideas and experiences of a sermon is what homiletics call arrangement or determining a sermon structure. It can be a difficult task.

1. When one considers the use of sermon structures, there is a wide spectrum of practice that ranges from complete freedom to strict limitation. Some pastors (in complete freedom) say, “I don’t bother figuring out the structure of my sermon ... what happens happens.” Other pastors (in strict limitation) choose to use the same structure for every sermon. Where do you fall on that spectrum? Where would you like to be? Why?

2. Over the years, preachers have discovered sermon structures to be valuable for a variety of reasons. Name one reason it is valuable to know the structure of your sermon and offer an example from your own preaching experience.

If this question is difficult to answer, you may want to share and then discuss the following five values of sermon structures identified by homiletics over the years:

a) A structure guides the selection of material, helping the preacher figure out what belongs and what does not belong in the sermon.

b) A structure manages the proportion of material, helping the preacher see if the sermon is overdeveloped or underdeveloped in one particular area.

c) A structure aids memory, helping the preacher remember the flow of the sermon and, when appropriate, communicate that flow through clear transitions to the people.

d) A structure influences the involvement of the listeners in the sermon. If there is too much variety, listeners can be confused. If there is too much regularity, listeners can become bored as the sermon appears predictable. But a variety of structures regularly used offers listeners an engaging experience.

e) A structure influences the spiritual formation of God’s people. Different sermon structures carry different emphases in preaching. For example, a thematic structure will reinforce a catechetical teaching, a verse-by-verse structure will take the listeners deeper into a text, and a law and Gospel structure will highlight the proclamation of sin and grace. Purposefully selecting your sermon structure can help you attend to different aspects of spiritual formation.



HANDOUTS AND VISUAL MATERIALS

Homiletical Theory: The Pilgrimage of Preaching

- **Preaching as Pilgrimage**

This chart offers a visual diagram that is discussed in the video segment and helps pastors visualize their sermons as composed of two different types of experience: moments of meditation and moments of movement.

- **Moments of Meditation**

This handout offers a listing of various methods of development.

- **Moments of Movement**

This handout offers a listing of various methods of movement or progression in a sermon. It is to be used in conjunction with the material offered on sermon structures at www.concordiatheology.org (concordiatheology.org/sermon-structs/).

Putting Theory into Practice: Sample Sermon

- **Sermon Structure: Central Image – Single Focus**

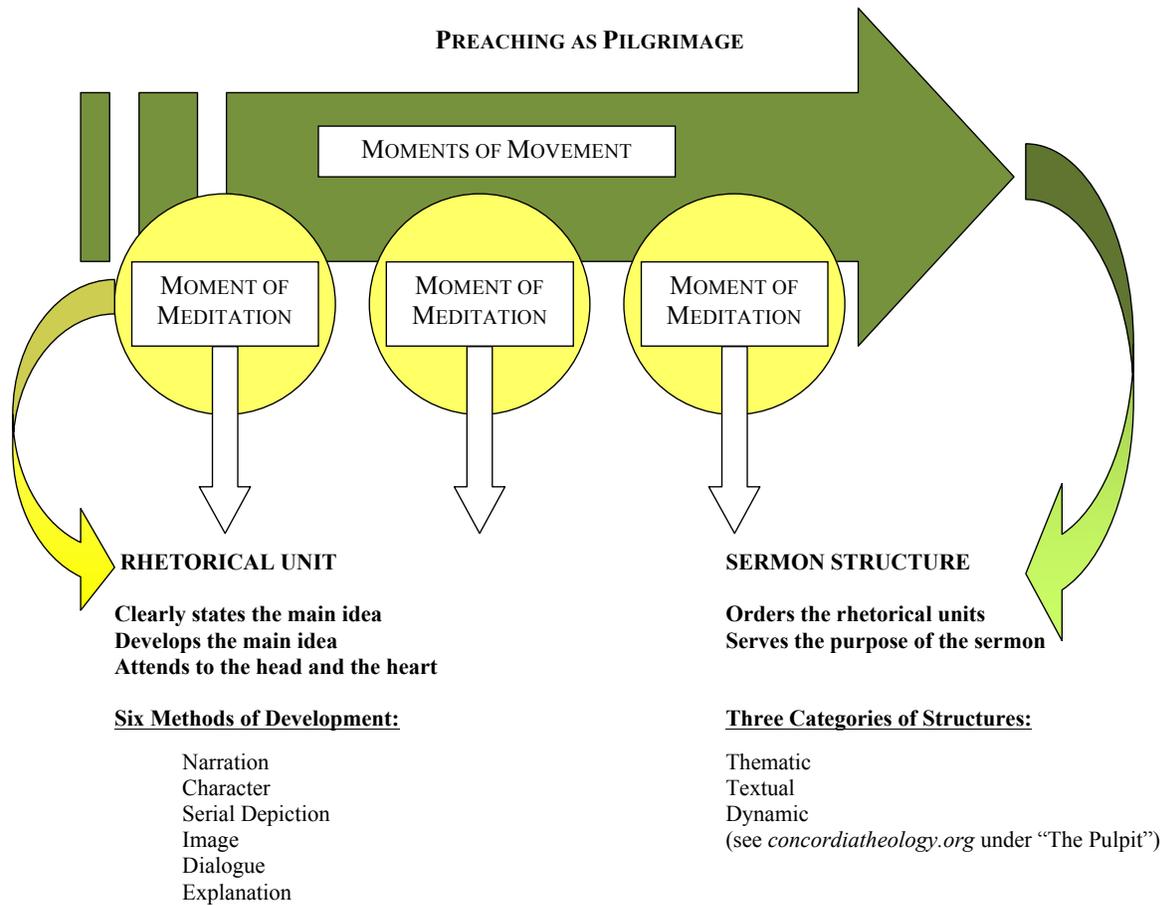
This handout offers a description of the sermon structure that was used in the sample sermon. This theory is also accessible at www.concordiatheology.org (concordiatheology.org/sermon-structs/).

- **Sample Sermon: Acts 2:14a, 22-36**

This chart offers a visual diagram of the sample sermon, identifying both the methods of development used to form moments of meditation in the sermon and the sermon structure used to form moments of movement in the sermon.



PREACHING AS PILGRIMAGE



MOMENTS OF MEDITATION: METHODS OF DEVELOPMENT

A moment of meditation is a period of time in the sermon (usually from one to five minutes) during which the preacher focuses upon one particular idea and develops that idea for the those listening so they understand it (head) and care about it (heart).

This moment of meditation may be deductive (where the preacher states the idea and then develops it) or inductive (where the preacher develops the idea and then states it). In a moment of meditation, the preacher will do two things: he will state a single idea for the audience, usually in a short and memorable way, and he will develop that idea for the audience using one or more of the following methods of development.

For those beginning to use these methods of development, they may be hard to differentiate. The more frequently and intentionally the preacher uses them, however, the more clearly he can distinguish between them. And the more clearly he can distinguish between them, the more variety he has for touching the hearts and minds of those listening.

A. Narration

This method develops an idea or experience by offering the listeners a story that places that idea or experience into action. In narration, there will usually be temporal movement for the listeners and a conflict that is brought through climax to

resolution. The climax of the story should relate to the main idea of the rhetorical unit, so that the dynamics of narrative reinforce the idea. Also, the preacher needs to manage the details of the story for the sake of the meaning. Concrete details are used carefully so listeners are led to the main idea rather than distracted from the focus that is being developed.

Sometimes, the preacher can use an epic form in telling the story. In an epic form, the preacher begins at the middle of the story (right before the climax) and then takes the listeners back to the beginning, only to return to the place where he began the telling so that he can bring the story to a dramatic, climactic close. This method reinforces the climax for the listeners by starting at the moment of climactic suspense and then deepening the crisis before bringing it to a resolution.

B. Character

This method develops an idea or experience by viewing it from the perspective of a particular individual. The listeners are able to enter into the life experience of someone and view the idea or experience from his or her perspective.

Development by character offers listeners a living witness of the main idea and a sense of how it is encountered in real life. The value of this method is that it personalizes the idea and, through listener empathy, generates a personal association with the idea or experience.

Character can often be confused with narrative. In both methods of development events usually happen. With narrative, however, the focus is upon the events themselves. With character, the focus is upon how a person interacts with, responds



to or processes those events. Often with character, the main idea will be connected to a change in the person (the character) that happens when the person witnesses an event. For example, narrative would focus upon the event of our Lord's appearance to Saul on the Damascus road. Character would focus upon that event from Saul's perspective. It would develop Saul's internal transformation that occurred when the Lord appeared to him on the Damascus road.

C. Serial Depiction

This method develops an idea or experience by offering the listeners a series of examples that clarify and reinforce the idea through repetition. These examples are usually more than a single sentence but they do not last as long as a fuller narrative. In serial depiction, the preacher has the opportunity to cover a wide range of experiences, demonstrating how this focus is apparent in a variety of situations or contexts. Often these examples are connected by a simple refrain.

The preacher orders these experiences carefully, so that there is some development, logical (e.g., ordering from personal to communal) or experiential (e.g., climactic ordering), in the sequence of examples and so that no one example overpowers all of the others.

D. Image

This method develops an idea or experience by associating it with a central image for contemplation. In developing the image, the preacher offers concrete details to enable visualization and uses poetic language to evoke significance or meaning. The goal is not that the listeners

be able to reproduce the entire image but rather that they interact with the image in a way that leads to the meaning the preacher seeks to convey.

Often a story lies behind the image. In development, however, the image remains central. The preacher freezes that moment in time and focuses upon the presence of the image. By viewing the image from various perspectives (e.g., the artist who created the image, a viewer who sees the image, a person within the image, the place that surrounds the image), the preacher can creatively appropriate the image and use it to communicate a specific idea or experience.

E. Dialogue

This method develops an idea or experience by placing it within a conversation. The conversation may be spoken by the preacher and overheard by the people, or it may occur between the preacher and the congregation (for example, in a sermon on love for one another, the preacher could interview a member who recently participated in a servant event or, in a sermon on the fifth petition, the preacher could ask congregational members to name how the world encourages us to sin). It also could occur between members of the congregation and then be summarized by the preacher (for example, in a sermon on prayer, the preacher could encourage members to share prayer petitions with one another).

When spoken by the preacher, this dialogue often places into conversational speech the anticipated reactions of those listening and takes the form of disagreement moving toward greater



clarity (e.g., a debate or series of questions and answers) or agreement moving toward deeper understanding (e.g., a collaborative endeavor of mutual discovery wherein each speaker makes significant contributions to the dialogue). The entire rhetorical unit does not need to be a sustained dialogue. Often, the preacher conveys the most important point in a moment of conversation.

F. Explanation

This method develops an idea or experience through the use of logical explanation. Using reason, the preacher offers the listeners a series of statements that hold together by the logic of definition, classification, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, process, problem and solution, analogy, or example and explanation.



MOMENTS OF MOVEMENT: SERMON STRUCTURES

A sermon structure is the purposeful ordering of moments of meditation in the sermon. A structure helps the preacher identify what material will be included in the sermon, what material will be left out and how to organize that material into a purposeful proclamation. Sermon structures can be classified into three general categories:

A. Thematic structures arise from the teaching of the sermon. The preacher identifies a main teaching and then divides that teaching into points upon which the listeners will meditate during the course of the sermon. In writing this sermon, the preacher needs to be able to identify the theme statement for the sermon, break that theme into parts (moments of meditation) and then arrange those parts in a logical order. The logical progression of the theme forms the major transitions of the sermon.

In thematic sermons, four matters are important to consider as the preacher develops each of the points of the sermon:

1. First, the preacher usually wants each point to be related to the text and to the lives of the listeners. This way, the sermon mirrors how teachings of the faith arise from God's Word and shape the lives of His people.

2. Second, the Law and Gospel proclamation of these sermons tends to be incorporated in the development of specific points. Thus, a thematic sermon could proclaim the Gospel three times (within three of the four points being made in the sermon) rather than having a major Law and Gospel progression at the middle of the sermon (as in the Law and Gospel structure).

3. Third, the preacher wants to use a variety of methods in developing the points. To use logical explanation both as the structure and as the major method of development for every point quickly turns the sermon into a lecture.

4. Fourth, the preacher will want to use both inductive and deductive experiences in developing the points of the sermon. Sometimes, the preacher will develop an idea inductively, offering listeners the story or the serial depiction and then concluding with a clear statement of the point of that portion of the sermon. At other times the preacher will develop an idea deductively, clearly stating the point first for the listeners and then offering the material that develops the idea for them. The variation of methods of development (story, explanation, image, character, dialogue, etc.) and the variation of inductive and deductive development help maintain listener interest in thematic preaching.

B. Textual structures arise from the biblical text for the sermon. They may follow the text in a verse-by-verse fashion, move from text to or incorporate the genre of the text into the sermon (e.g., a proverbial sermon structure).



In textual structures, three matters are important for the preacher to consider:

1. First, the preacher wants to make sure that he is proclaiming Christ. Lutherans practice a Christ-centered interpretation of Scripture, and the textual structure offers a preacher the opportunity to model that type of interpretation for the listeners. Sometimes, because a text does not mention Christ or focuses upon an oracle of judgment or a topic of sanctification, the preacher may be inclined to leave Christ out of the sermon. The office of preaching and the practice of Christ-centered interpretation prevent that from happening.

2. Second, the preacher needs to determine the limits of the text. Sometimes, those limits are going to be narrower than the text that was read. Sometimes, those limits are going to be wider. What is important is that the preacher recognizes how the limits one uses help highlight a particular theme. For example, one could preach on the temptations of Jesus by focusing on only one temptation (e.g., “turn these stones into bread”) or on all three temptations. The preacher also could read these temptations in light of earlier or later events in the Gospel from which they are taken (e.g., the Baptism of Jesus or the feeding of the 5,000) or by reading these temptations in light of the larger trajectory of the biblical narrative (e.g., the temptation of Adam and the temptation of Christ). How one sets the limits of the text can shape the larger teaching of the sermon.

3. Third, the preacher will seek coherence in the material he presents to the listeners. When working with a text, preachers can sometimes overwhelm their listeners with all sorts of information. The sermon can sound as if it were an unorganized reading of the various study notes found in the margins of a study Bible. Rather than overwhelm the listeners with a variety of information, the preacher seeks to focus their attention and guide their experience toward a purposeful end by carefully and intentionally selecting a coherent body of material that unfolds the text for them. All of the textual material that is present in the sermon should hold together to support one major idea, intention or experience for the sermon as a whole.

C. Dynamic structures arise from the experience of the listeners. They identify the experiences of one’s listeners, their cultural and spiritual modes of knowing, and use them in service to the proclamation of the Gospel. For example, recognizing the centrality of daily repentance as an experience of the faith, the preacher might organize the sermon as a movement from the experience of law (leading to the confession of sin) to the experience of Gospel (leading to trust in God’s gracious work in Christ).

In some cases, dynamic structures can use the rhetorical experiences of a culture in service to the proclamation of the Gospel and thereby be quite accessible for contemporary hearers. For example, an image-based structure will identify the cultural dynamics of images and appropriately draw from those experiences to shape the sermon. The preacher identifies the dynamics of a particular



cultural experience (i.e., the contemporary cultural experience of images) and then creatively appropriates those dynamics for proclamation of the faith (i.e., helping listeners approach the faith through the experience of images).

Every structure has strengths and weaknesses in respect to the office of preaching. For example, a verse-by-verse structure can work well in communicating the meaning of a text but may cause the listeners to be unsure of the sermon's primary teaching or to lose sight of the work of Christ. In contrast, a thematic

structure can work well in defining one main teaching for the listeners and applying it to their lives but may overlook much of the text or not relate this teaching to God's gracious work in Christ. For this reason, a preacher exercises care in the selection and use of a sermon structure.

You can find a listing of sermon structures that offer a brief description of each structure and, when possible, a sample sermon demonstrating that structure in practice at www.concordiatheology.org (under "The Pulpit").



SERMON STRUCTURE: CENTRAL IMAGE SINGLE FOCUS

Image-based sermon structures seek to use the cultural power of images in service to the homiletical task. While it is necessary for the preacher to know what the image is, the image does not need to be displayed. The preacher can simply describe it. Visual display of the image is more powerful for the listeners but harder for the preacher to control, unlike a verbal description of the image, which is less powerful but easier for the preacher to control.

A. Central Image

This sermon structure uses a single image and fosters devotional contemplation of that image.

In the opening of the sermon, the preacher describes the image for the listeners. The preacher then uses that image as a source for continuing devotional contemplation throughout the sermon. The image serves as a lens through which one views the textual exposition, the theological confession, the evangelical proclamation and the listener interpretation of the sermon. Having a single image lends coherence to the sermon.

As the preacher returns to the image periodically throughout the sermon, he may approach it with a single focus or a multiple focus.

I. Single Focus

With a single focus, the image remains the same throughout the sermon. The preacher may approach that image from one perspective (for example, viewing the image from the perspective of the artist who created it) or the preacher may approach that image from a variety of perspectives (for example, viewing the same image from the perspective of the artist who created it, of a person who contemplates it and of a character within it). While the perspectives differ, the image itself remains the same.

If approaching the image from one perspective, the sermon can reinforce a single theme in a variety of situations. For example, the first encounter with the image can establish a theme. As the preacher uses the image again in the sermon, the theme is interpreted in relation to the text and then, later, in relation to the listeners.

If approaching the image from a variety of perspectives, the sermon can develop or unfold the theme. For example, the first encounter with the image could evoke an interpretation that will later be expanded or even corrected in the sermon. By changing how the image is seen, the listeners are able to track the basic development of a larger theme in the sermon. Each stage of development (e.g., moving from a misconception to a clearer vision, moving from in terms of one's relationship to God to in terms of one's relationship to others, or moving from repentance to forgiveness and finally to restoration) is captured by preaching the image from a different perspective.



2. Multiple Focus

With a multiple focus, each time the preacher returns to the image, he focuses upon a different aspect of that image.

The preacher may begin by looking at the whole image and then focus upon one detail and then another. Or he may look at smaller details and, in the conclusion of the sermon, consider the image as a whole. If the image is displayed, the preacher may crop the image so that only a small detail is revealed, helping the listeners focus upon that particular aspect at that point in the sermon. In terms of the progression of the sermon, the image itself serves as a map of the ideas of the sermon, each portion meditated upon at different points in the sermon. For example, the preacher may use an artistic representation of a biblical event to walk the listeners through the text, slowing down the progression of the story to meditate upon various individuals and their experience of the event.



SAMPLE SERMON: ACTS 2:14A, 22-36

Progression: The sermon offers a central image that shapes how the listeners interpret the text and the work of God in their lives.



	Introduction	Image	Text	Image	Listeners	Image
D E V E L O P M E N T	Explanation: We tend to read this text as law (a divine pattern how we ought to preach).	Image: We can read this text as children of God, through the image of a musician who makes music from empty glasses.	Serial Depiction: Peter, who is known for speaking, becomes an empty vessel.	Image: In the kingdom of God what matters is the ruling Lord who touches empty vessels with His Spirit and makes them sing.	Serial Depiction: God calls us in various vocations to speak for Him. Serial Depiction: But we have a fear of speaking for God Character: One student's experience of being an empty vessel	Dialogue: Conversation with student where I shared God's gracious work for Him. Narrative: Student's preaching the Gospel Image: The ruling Christ touches us by water and the Spirit and teaches us to sing.
	(Deductive)	(Deductive)	(Inductive)	(Deductive)	(Deductive)	(Inductive)



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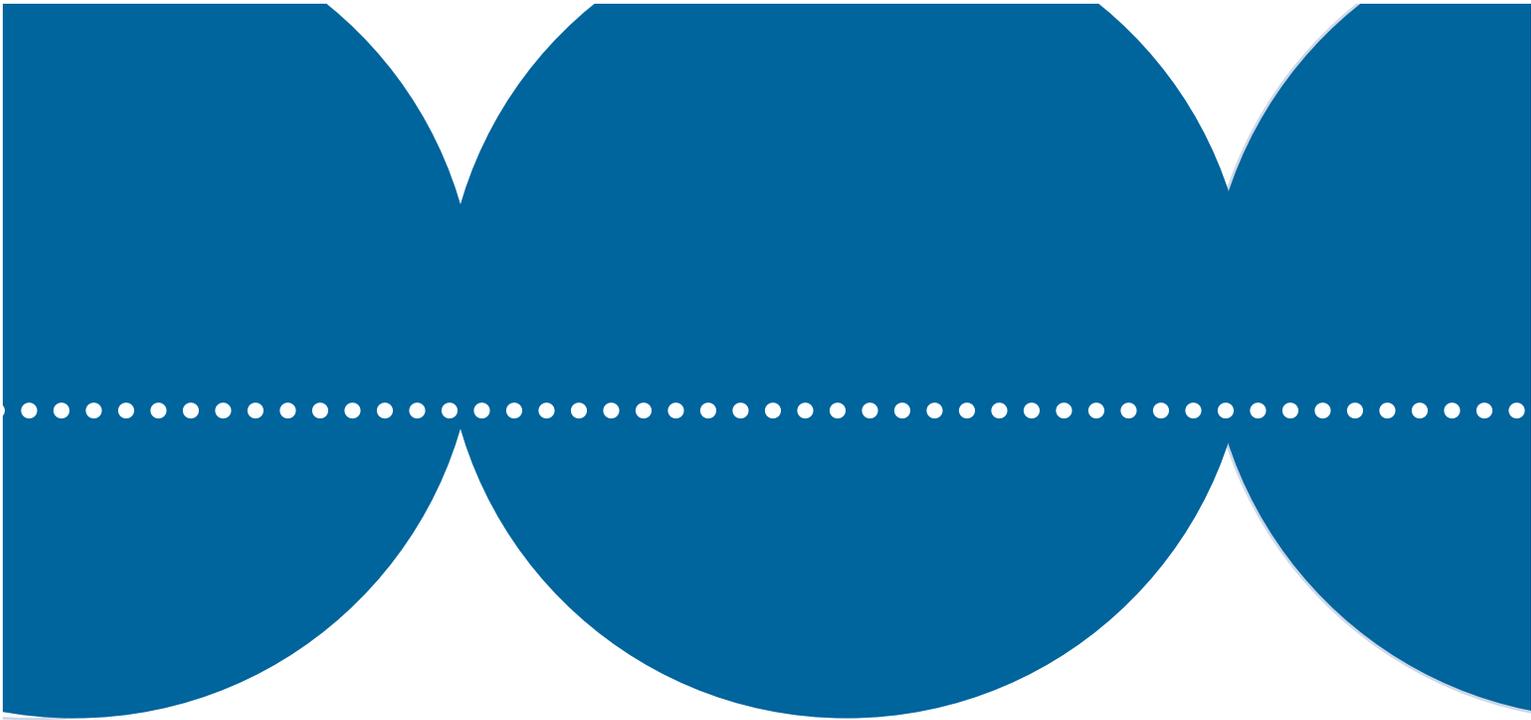
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For an overview and brief description of various sermon structures, see the Web-based preaching resource, “Sermon Structures” at [www.concordiatheology.org](http://www.concordiatheology.org/concordiatheology.org/sermon-structs/) (concordiatheology.org/sermon-structs/).





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