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Maximizing the Sermonic Moment at Adaville Baptist Church of Spindale, North Carolina

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MAXIMIZING THE SERMONIC MOMENT
AT ADAVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF
SPINDALE, NORTH CAROLINA

A PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE M. CHRISTOPHER WHITE SCHOOL OF DIVINITY
GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY
BOILING SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

CALVIN R. SAYLES

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APPROVAL FORM

MAXIMIZING THE SERMONIC MOMENT
AT ADAVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF
SPINDALE, NORTH CAROLINA

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To my beloved wife Sandy, the second greatest gift of God, who taught me love.

To my sons, Joshua and Nathanael, in whom I have found such joy, love, and respect.

To Dr. Robert Canoy, my faculty advisor, and my many professors at Gardner-Webb University who shared not only their wisdom but their lives.

To Dr. Guy Sayles, my peer supervisor, who met me at the intersection of kingdom and culture, and taught me it is a good place to live.

To my co-workers in Christ at Adaville Baptist Church with whom I have shared laughter, tears, and abundant life.

ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to present the most effective weekly sermon that is fresh, clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing for those that hear it. Congregational feedback was gathered over four weeks, through surveys, biometrics captured on film, and simultaneous sermon feedback. Adjustments, based on the feedback gathered during the first four weeks, were utilized in sermons during two additional weeks. The desired outcome was that the sermonic moment will be meaningful to the congregation, help them to internalize God's desires and expectations for His people, and contribute to the transformation of His children into Christ-likeness.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

David A. Enyart states, “Preaching is communication wherein an authentic and dedicated believer translates the living Word into language that is fresh, clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing.”¹ *Fresh! Clear! Interesting! Relevant!* Enyart seems to imply that these sermonic qualities will equate to life change. But is “fresh, clear, and interesting” to the preacher, also interesting to the congregation?

As preachers bring a message, week after week, are we hitting the mark? Or are we inadvertently communicating in such a way that we are hindering sermonic effectiveness? In this project I identified what the congregation thought were both effective and ineffective in the weekly sermon and then made appropriate adjustments to maximize the sermonic moment.

This project provides a report and analysis of a six week experiment conducted at Adaville Baptist Church. The first four weeks included a significant variety of different sermon styles which were presented to the congregation and their response recorded. The variety of sermonic factors presented included auditory content, visual content, participatory content, the presentation of the content, and other distractions to content.

Over the first four weeks, congregational responses were recorded using three methods. These three methods were biometrics captured on film, simultaneous sermon feedback, and two types of post sermon surveys. The lessons learned from the first four weeks of feedback were then applied to the final two sermons, during the six week period.

¹ David A. Enyart, *Creative Anticipation: Narrative Sermon Designs for Telling the Story*, (Xlibris Press, 2002), 44.

Most pastors have probably come to the point where we have asked ourselves, “Does what I do in preaching really make any difference?” The hope was that by applying the responses gathered during the first four weeks, the quality of the sermons during the final two weeks were improved and equate to greater life change in the congregation. Additionally, indicators were identified that will improve the quality of all future sermons.

Project Setting

Adaville Baptist Church is a congregation just over 100 years old. On average there are 182 people who attend Sunday school and 244 who attend worship service. The church is incredibly generous in their giving, dedicated to many ministries in and out of the church, and many have chosen to live their lives through the congregational community. The church is moderate in its theology and has been plateaued numerically for over 20 years. Twenty-three people were baptized in 2011, the most in the last seven years.

The church recently underwent a deliberate process of gathering a fresh vision of where God would have us invest our gifts and talents which resulted in a new mission statement, vision statement, and vision path. The results of this study resulted in the following, which should provide insight into the church setting and its perceived areas of strength as well as areas requiring additional emphasis:

The Mission of Adaville Baptist Church

In response to the love of God, we love by worshiping Him with joy, individually and as a church family. We worship Him by studying the Bible and allowing His teachings to help us become more like Jesus. As we are empowered and guided by the

Spirit, we joyfully share the Good News we have received. Sharing our lives in unity, we strive to meet the needs of the church, community, and world. Like Jesus, we welcome all people.

In Brief...

We love, because He first loved us; caring, sharing, growing and welcoming all!

Vision

The vision of Adaville Baptist Church is to sustain the many excellent, ongoing ministries of the church while addressing four other areas to which we feel God is leading us. These four areas are: 'As You Go' Evangelism, Deepening Relationships (an emphasis on better incorporating new Christians and new members of the church), Bridging the Gap for Young Adults, and "To one of these brothers of Mine" (an emphasis on feeding the needy and working with the Spindale Correctional Facility).

The feedback from the church council, that developed the mission and vision statement, was that the church was pleased with the current state of preaching at the church. This was verified by a baseline survey that was given during the summer of 2012. The results of this survey are found at Appendix A. In general they believed that preaching facilitated their worship and discipleship.

Statement of Problem or Ministry Question

How can I prepare and present the most effective weekly sermon that will be fresh, clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing?

Project Goal

The goal of this project was to be a more effective messenger of God's word by minimizing inhibitors and maximizing actions and activities that facilitate effective

communications. The desired outcome was that the sermonic moment would be meaningful to the congregation, help them to internalize God's desires and expectations for His people, and contribute in a more meaningful way to the transformation of His children into Christ-likeness.

CHAPTER TWO

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In late June of 2012 a baseline survey was offered to the congregation to determine the perceived effectiveness of the sermons offered over the last year. The results of this survey are found in Appendix A. Surveys were offered for three consecutive weeks to the congregation. Sixty-seven surveys were completed and returned.

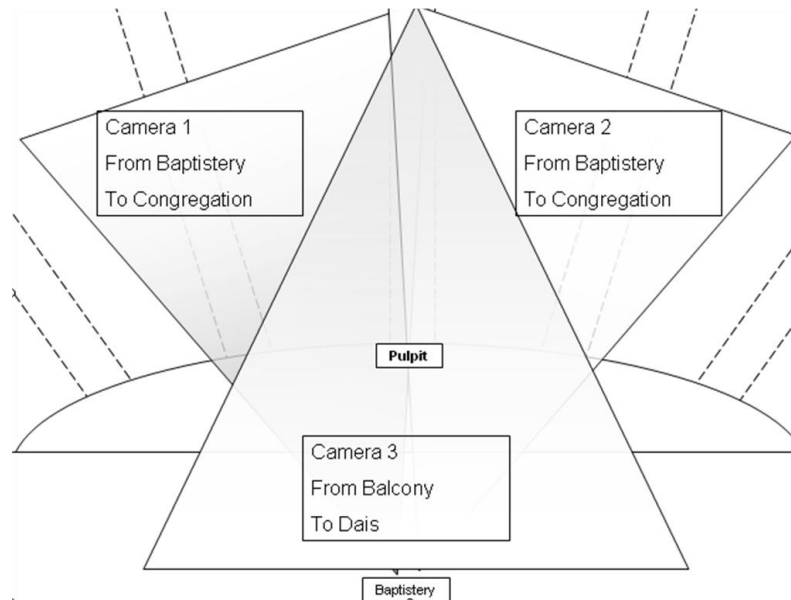
In general, the results of the surveys were positive, with approximately 83% of responders identifying that the sermons over the last year have met their spiritual needs. Roughly 7% were neutral and the remainder communicated, through various questions, that sermons were not meeting their needs. Of those that were dissatisfied, there was a high correlation (71.4%) to those that were also going through a significant period of personal tribulation. The following report includes a comparison of these baseline results as compared to both the feedback from individual sermons over the first four weeks of the study, as well as the final two sermons.

As previously identified there were three methods used for gathering congregational response (level of engagement) over four weeks. These three methods were biometrics captured on film, simultaneous sermon feedback, and post sermon surveys, (short term and long term memory).

The level of congregational engagement refers to the connectivity of the congregation to the sermon. This may be based on their emotional involvement, intellectual involvement, mystical relationship, a call to action, or some other feature that has drawn and connected them into the sermon.

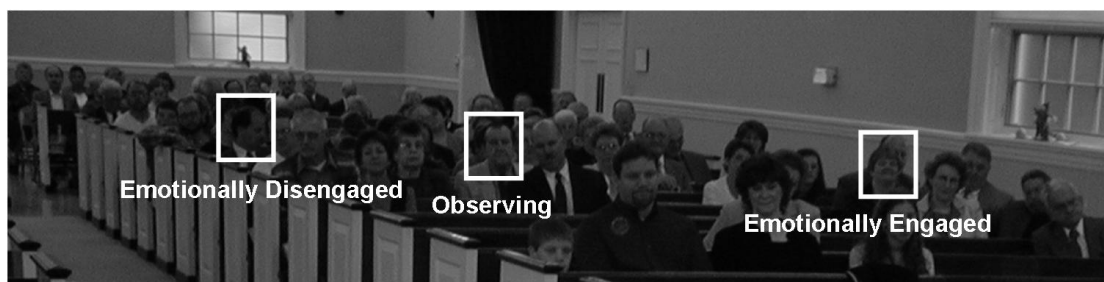
Biometrics captured on film. Three video cameras were positioned around the sanctuary to capture the response of the congregation as well as the sermon presentation.

The graphic below identifies the location of the cameras.



(Position of digital cameras throughout the sanctuary)

A ‘snap shot’ was taken every 90 seconds with each picture given a numeric value and plotted on line graph. The numeric value was based on individuals within the congregation that are judged to be ‘*Disengaged*’, ‘*Observing*’, or ‘*Engaged*’. Evaluation was based upon body language, eye contact, and facial expression as recorded on film.



Although not an exact science, combined with the other means of evaluation, the objective was to identify moments that were either effective or hindering communications.

Simultaneous Sermon Feedback. 20 individuals in the congregation were asked to provide constant feedback of their engagement measured through electronic devices. A company called *Poll Everywhere* developed software that facilitates the use of cell phones and texting to provide continuous, simultaneous feedback. These individuals were asked to text a “+”, “=”, or a “-“ between 15 and 30 times during the sermon. The plus sign indicated a high degree of involvement, an equal sign indicated a moderate degree, and a minus sign indicated a low degree of involvement.

Each text message also provided a “time hack” so that responses could be linked to what was going on at a specific moment in the sermon. This information was then correlated and plotted on a line graph.

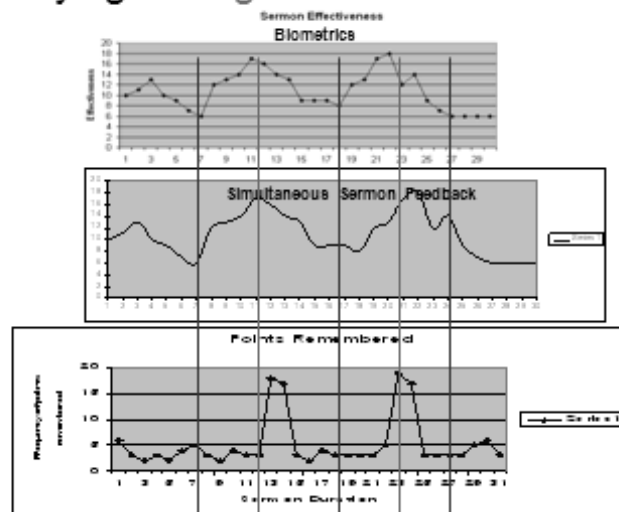
Post Sermon Surveys. Immediately following the service, two types of surveys were given. The first type of survey focused on acquiring feedback from the current sermon of the week, addressing short term memory. This survey is found at Appendix B.

The second type of survey focused on acquiring feedback from the previous week’s sermon of the week, addressing long term memory. This survey is found at Appendix C. Both types of surveys identified what and when engagement was both high and low. This information was also placed on a line graph.

Once the data were gathered from all three methods, and then graphed, they identified at what points in the message there were high and low degrees of connectivity between the congregation and the sermon. (See below). Once these high and lows were

identified, the sermon, also filmed, was reviewed to determine what occurred at that point in time. By the end of four weeks, there was a significant list of both sermonic facilitators and inhibitors.

Identifying Strong Points and Weak Points



Week five and six were dedicated to applying the sermonic lessons learned over the first four weeks. These final two weeks were measured in the same way as identified above. The objective of the project was to test whether or not there would be more and longer periods of connectivity, and that the congregation would feel the sermon to be fresh, clear, interesting, relevant, and therefore resulting in life change.

Sermon Emphasis by Week

During the first four weeks, four different sermon styles were presented, as well as other factors that might facilitate or inhibit congregational connectivity. The matrix below identifies the week as well as the style, with additional notes. No matter the style, every effort was made to present each message with excellence. These sermons are located at Appendices E-H.

Week	Style	Defined As	Additional Factors
1 (9 Sept)	Narrative (story telling)	A narrative exposition of a biblical concept using the power of story to apply its truth.	Some visuals were provided. Movement occurred, to include moving into the congregation. Duration was approximately 30 minutes.
2 (16 Sept)	Expository	A systematic exposition that expounds upon the meaning of a particular text or passage of scripture.	Outlines were provided both in the bulletin and on the screen behind the pulpit. Movement was kept to a minimum. Alliteration was used. Duration was approximately 25 minutes.
3 (23 Sept)	Biographical	Preaching that focuses on a particular Bible character. The preacher explains the successes and failures of that biblical character and what we can learn from his or her life.	Outlines were provided both in the bulletin and on the screen behind the pulpit. Humor was incorporated. Duration was approximately 25 minutes.
4 (30 Sept)	Topical	Using several Scriptures throughout the Bible to address an issue or discuss a topic.	Drama and music was incorporated into the sermon. The congregation was encouraged to participate. Video was incorporated. Duration was approximately 30 minutes to include the Lord's Supper.

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The theological rationale of this project includes an exploration of preaching in the Old Testament, and the New Testament, specifically focusing on the parables of Jesus, preaching in the Book of Acts, and the preaching of the Apostle Paul.

With that foundation, I also explored some of the great preachers of church history, specifically, the preaching of John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther, and John Calvin. Finally, I explored commentary on contemporary preaching to include some works of Michael J. Quicke, Thomas G. Long, and David A. Enyart.

Why these specific preachers and authors and not others? Although there are clearly hundreds of excellent choices, these men were prolific preachers themselves and deeply affected their communities of faith. Additionally, they wrote about, and positively affected other preachers, some for hundreds of years to come. Finally, these preachers specifically wrote about an integral part of this report; the tension between reliance on the Spirit as compared to a high level of preparation and feedback from their congregations. These preachers do not represent an exhaustive list of expertise, but they do represent a good spectrum, addressing the issues involved in this report, and providing key insights.

Preaching in the Old Testament: Definitions

According to the *Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon*, the two most common Hebrew words for ‘preach’ are בָּצַר and נָתַן.² בָּצַר is used 24 times in 21 different verses of the Old Testament and is defined as:

- to bear news, bear tidings, publish, preach, show forth

² *Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon. Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, CD-ROM version 5.17.0014. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004).

- (Piel)
 - to gladden with good news
 - to bear news
 - to announce (salvation) as good news, preach
- (Hithpael) to receive good news
- נָתַן is used 18 times in 14 verses and is defined as:
 - to drop, drip, distil, prophesy, preach, discourse
 - (Qal) to drop, drip
 - (Hiphil)
 - to drip
 - to drop (prophecy)

Preaching in the Old Testament: The Prophets

Most contemporary preachers find some correlation between Old Testament prophets and themselves. Yet there are also great differences based upon these definitions and their stories. Perhaps two of the closest comparisons are found in Isaiah 61 and Nahum 1.

Isaiah 61:1 says “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners.”³ And Nahum 1:15 says “Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace! Celebrate your feasts, O Judah; pay your vows. For never again will the wicked one pass through you; He is cut off completely.”

Both passages have much in common in that the prophet has been given a specific message from God to give to the people. Both messages deal with a future day when Israel will be set free and restored.

Yet there is no example in the Old Testament that discusses the preparation of a message. It seems assumed that a true prophet of God receives a very specific message

³ All scripture references will be based on the NASB unless otherwise noted.

from God to speak to His people at a specific time. Both the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of the message are given from God. For example, Jeremiah 1:9 says, “Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, now, I have put my words in your mouth.” To bring any other message than one given by God carried the dire penalty of a false prophet.

The single message was often repeated, sometimes for decades, and the theme occasionally expanded upon. There were often creative ways that a message was communicated, not just in direct word or metaphor, but also by physical symbol.

For example the prophet Moses was directed to circumcise every male child to communicate an intimate and everlasting relationship with God’s children, (Genesis 17). God used an earthenware jar at the valley of Ben-hinnom to communicate His displeasure with Israel and their future destruction (Jeremiah 19). Ezekiel was directed to eat his food after it was cooked over dung to represent how the nation of Israel had defiled itself (Ezekiel 4). Likewise Jeremiah is directed to buy a field at Anathoth to communicate the hope of future restoration (Jeremiah 32). Yet none of these dramatic, creative, incredibly effective ways seem to ever be initiated by the prophet, but rather are directed by God. Should contemporary preachers be likewise limited? Or, are we to take the example of our heavenly Father and use dramatic, creative tools effectively to communicate the Scriptures?

The Old Testament identifies that things dedicated to God are to be well and skillfully done; detailed and prepared well. Five times in Exodus the word ‘skillfully’ (בְּטָבָה) is used to describe the building of the temple and clothing for the high priest. Music dedicated to God is also to be played joyfully and skillfully.

For example, in Exodus 39:5 it says,

“The skillfully woven band which was on it was like its workmanship, of the same material: of gold and of blue and purple and scarlet material, and fine twisted linen, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.”

In the same way, Psalm 33:3 says “Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.” A correlation could easily be made, that as music is to be well prepared, so too should a preacher be well prepared in order to communicate effectively and pleasingly both to his or her audience and even to God.

Preaching in the New Testament: Definitions

The New Testament has several Greek words that are translated ‘preach.’ For example the word κηρύσσω is used 59 times and could be defined as, “To preach, proclaim, tell, often urging acceptance of the message, with warnings of consequences for not doing so.” The Greek word εὐαγγελίζω is used 52 times and is defined as “In the NT it always refers to the death, burial, resurrection, and witness about Jesus Christ, including its implications for humankind’s relationship to God.” The Greek word κήρυγμα is used 33 times and is defined as, “Preaching, proclamation, message, with a focus on the content of what is preached.”⁴ The following sections will review in more detail preaching within the New Testament.

Preaching in the Gospels: Jesus the Master Teacher/Preacher

Jesus Himself used different styles to proclaim the Good News to different groups at different times. Sometimes he told stories, other times parables, or asked questions, and other times He was much more direct. Jesus seemed to understand that different

⁴ *Greek – English Readers Lexicon of the New Testament. Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary, CD-ROM version 5.17.0014. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004).*

audiences at different times would hear and receive His message most effectively through a variety of means.

For instance, in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus even uses a child to communicate a great truth. Matthew 18:1 says,

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3 and said, Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

A variety of communications methods seem to be a hallmark of Jesus’ preaching. Even the people Jesus chose to associate with communicated His message and intentions.

Jesus’ preaching was also marked by wisdom, authority, boldness, and grace. Certainly it would seem that preachers should prepare and follow the example of the master preacher and teacher.

Wisdom. Matthew 13:53 says,

“When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there. 54 He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?”

Wisdom, (σοφία) is defined as “knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action; sagacity, discernment, or insight. Either secular or divine, as Christ is called “the wisdom of God” in 1Co 1:24, 30. On the basis of the OT, wisdom can be personified.”⁵

Jesus knew how and when to speak to those that might stand against Him and those that desired to follow. This wisdom seems to come out of Jesus’ deep relational dependence with His heavenly Father.

⁵ Ibid. CD-ROM, 5.17.0014.

Likewise the contemporary preacher will gain wisdom by spending time with the heavenly Father, seeking His will, while at the same time studying the Scripture and commentaries. Additionally wisdom may be obtained by studying the congregational audience and determining the best method to communicate great scriptural truths.

Authority. Mark 1:21 says, “They went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach. 22 They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

Authority, (ἐξουσία) is defined as “power, the right to control or govern; dominion, the area or sphere of jurisdiction; a ruler, human or supernatural.”⁶ As Jesus spoke it was very clear that He was different from the scribes or Pharisees. In part, this difference was what drew people to Jesus, something that He never apologized for. Jesus accepted His authority from His heavenly Father and therefore spoke without fear.

While we will never have the authority of Christ Jesus, we can have confidence and power in preaching as we are guided by the Holy Spirit. Like Jesus, being obedient to the guidance of the Spirit is our authority and what enables us to speak fearlessly.

Boldness. John 7:26 says, “Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?”

Boldness, in this case translated as “publicly” (παρρησία), is defined as speaking with confidence, frankness, plainly and openly.⁷ Παρρησία, most often used in the Gospel of John, also implies speaking fearlessly.

For instance, later in verse 46, “The officers answered, never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.” As with ‘authority’, boldness, an essential element of

⁶ Ibid. CD-ROM, 5.17.0014.

⁷ Ibid. CD-ROM, 5.17.0014.

preaching, comes from having the confidence that we have rightly brought the word to the congregation based upon our ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit. But boldness can also come from a confidence that we have prepared well and selected an effective means of communicating the truth of the scripture.

Graciousness. Luke 4:22 says, “And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, is this not Joseph's son?” ‘Gracious’ (χάρις) is defined as “the state of kindness and favor toward someone, often with a focus on a benefit given to the object; by extension: gift, benefit; credit; words of kindness and benefit: thanks, blessing.”⁸ Therefore if we are to emulate the preaching of Jesus, our words should be both bold and full of grace.

It seems exceedingly clear that Jesus’ words are greatly dependent on the guiding of His Father. John 8:28 says, “So Jesus said, When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.”

Likewise, Mark 13:11 says,

“When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.”

In part, Jesus was preparing and comforting His disciples for what lay ahead and assuring them that they need not worry about what they were to say. But also Jesus is emphasizing the importance of relying on the power of the Holy Spirit when sharing the gospel. Although this is not a passage that speaks directly to the topic of preaching, like the 1 Corinthians 1:17 passage, it stresses that our speech, when defending or preaching the gospel, should be based upon the guiding of the Holy Spirit in that moment.

⁸ Ibid. CD-ROM, 5.17.0014.

Considering all of these scriptures and the example of the master preacher, we might come to the conclusion that preparation involves reliance on the guidance and the power of the Holy Spirit and everything else is of tertiary importance. Except, there seems to be something terribly important about two verses of scripture found in the Gospel of Mark. Mark 4:33-34 says,

“With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it; and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.”

These verses, and Jesus’ comment about parables, could be glossed over to get on to meatier subjects. Yet for a preacher, I believe the implications are profound.

What is a Parable and Why Did Jesus Speak in Them?

Perhaps the most common definition of parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Although there certainly is truth in this definition, it also minimizes the complexity and importance of the genre. The word parable (παραβολή, singular and plural) appears seventeen times in Matthew, thirteen times in Mark, and seventeen times in Luke. The number of parables is not as easily identified as the simple counting of the use of the word παραβολή. In fact, many scholars are not agreed on the exact number of parables because not all agree on what form constitutes a parable.⁹

Additionally, five times the New Testament uses the Greek word παροιμίαν for parable. This word may be synonymous with παραβολή or it may refer to a symbolic or figurative statement (John 10:6). Most would identify the number of New Testament

⁹ Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL:InterVarsity Press, 1992), 593.

parables somewhere between 33 and 85.¹⁰ The higher number equates to approximately one third of all of Jesus' teaching being in the form of parables.

Parables are not limited to the New Testament but are also found in several places in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word, מָשַׁל or *mashal*, is similar to a parable in that it is defined as a, "A proverb, pithy saying, comparison, or question; from a root meaning 'represent', or 'be like'; notably of Solomon's proverbs. The word parable is used in the Psalms, Proverbs, Ezekiel and Hosea. Parables are told by the prophets as well as found in Judges 9:7-20."¹¹

A precise definition of parable is,

"Derived from the Greek verb *paraballo*, composed of the preposition *para* meaning 'beside' and the verb *ballo*, 'to cast'. A parable is thus a comparison of two objects for the purpose of teaching, usually in the form of a story."¹²

Parables have been understood in many ways since they were first spoken. These include literal, moral, spiritual and anagogical (a mystical interpretation of a word, passage, or text, especially scriptural exegesis that detects allusions to heaven or the afterlife.)¹³ Throughout most of church history, the parables of Jesus have been allegorized. An example of such allegorical understanding is Augustine's interpretation of the Good Samaritan in which almost every element within the parable was given

¹⁰ Lorin L. Cranford, *The Parables of Jesus, Study Manual of the Parables of Jesus* (Self published on CD, 2000), 251-256.

¹¹ J.D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney, *The NIV Compact Dictionary of the Bible* (The Zondervan Corporation, 1989), On CD. 5.1.50.

¹² Ibid, 5.1.50.

¹³ Dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.reference.com/cite.html?qh=anagogical&ia=ced>, (accessed 13 August 2012).

theological meaning. “The man is Adam; Jerusalem is the heavenly city; Jericho is the moon which stands for our mortality; the robbers are the devil.”¹⁴

A. Julicher, a late 19th century scholar, wrote a two volume work on the parables that dramatically changed the interpretation of parables. Julicher denied the use of allegory but rather viewed the parables as a straightforward comparison that does not require interpretation. “He believed that parables have only one point of comparison; between the image and the idea being expressed. That one point is usually a general religious maxim.”¹⁵

After Julicher, C.H. Dodd and J. Jeremias studied the parables from 1935 to 1970. They both tried to understand the parables of Jesus in light of their historical and eschatological context. Dodd understood the parables in light of a realized eschatology, or the kingdom of heaven has arrived. Jeremias desired to understand the parables in light of their cultural and historical settings. Both agreed with Julicher that the parables should not be allegorized.¹⁶ Although there has been significant work done since Julicher and Dodd, for instance the structuralist approach and literary criticism, few would continue to understand parables allegorically.

Parables have some unifying characteristics. For instance, parables are usually brief, easy to remember stories, and involving only two or three movements. They usually have few descriptions, but are often taken from everyday life. Even so, they may not be realistic. The rule of “end stress” is often present or the crucial matter is often

¹⁴ Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL:InterVarsity Press, 1992), 591.

¹⁵ Ibid, 592.

¹⁶ Ibid, 592.

placed at the end. Additionally, most parables are theocentric in that they focus on God.¹⁷

As important as all of these facts are, they really only help to address the central question; why did Jesus speak in parables? It is an important question in that so much of what Jesus taught was in the form of parable.¹⁸ Mark 13:10 identifies that even the disciples were confused as to why Jesus so often taught in parables. Jesus responds in a way that may seem as confusing as many of His parables.

Mark 4:10 As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables. **11** And He was saying to them, To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables, **12** so that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven. (Isaiah 6:9 ff).

The triple tradition reference to Isaiah 6 seems to be the key to understanding Jesus response and explanation. Isaiah 6:9 says,

“He said, Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand.’ **10** Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.”

Even so, there have been a variety of understandings and interpretations. For instance, some from the Reformed tradition see this as a clear insider/outsider, elect/non-elect reference.¹⁹ In other words to some, knowledge and understanding has been granted, but to others, this knowledge is withheld. This understanding would say that

¹⁷ Ibid, 594

¹⁸ J. Dwight Pentecost, *Lessons in Life from the Master Teacher: The Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1982), 11.

¹⁹ *The ESV Study Bible, English Standard Version* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), commenting on Matthew 22:14, 218.

parables hide precious knowledge from those that are not elect. This valuable knowledge is like pearls that should not be cast before swine.

Raymond E. Brown understands the parables not to obscure the truth.

“Mark is really describing what he sees as the negative *result* of Jesus’ teaching among His own people, the majority of whom did not understand and were not converted. That Jesus’ purpose was not obscure is made clear by the sayings about the lamp and hidden things in 4:21-23 and also by the summary in 4:33-34 that has Jesus speaking the word to them in parables ‘as they were able to understand.’”²⁰

But why speak in what must have seemed like riddles? Would it not have been better to simply speak the truth directly? In part parables were used to divide those that came for spiritual truth and those that were simply curious. Some came seeking the kingdom of God and some came to be entertained. For those that came to be entertained, the parables would become wearisome and they would simply fall away.

But for the others that truly sought the kingdom and were willing to hear and act, they would recognize the truth and stay close to the Savior. It seems that even insiders struggled with the meaning of the parables. It must have become clear that to understand the parables, one had to stay close to the Teacher. If you did not understand the parable, you had to focus more carefully on the messenger. This too would then have been a reason for teaching in parables. The closer you are to Jesus, the more intimate the relationship, and the better chance you have of understanding the truth of the parable. And the closer you are to Jesus, the closer you are to the Kingdom of Heaven.

But above all, one of the most powerful reasons Jesus taught in parables, I found in Eugene Peterson’s book, *The Contemplative Pastor; Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Peterson states in his chapter entitled, *The Subversive Pastor*,

²⁰ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday Publishing Group, 1997), 133.

“The kingdom of self is heavily defended territory. Eden Adam and Eves are willing to pay their respects to God, but they don’t want him invading their turf. Direct assault in an openly declared war on the god-self is extraordinarily ineffective. Hitting sin head-on is like hitting a nail with a hammer; it only drives it deeper.”²¹

Parables are quietly subversive. Although the proclamation, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” was absolutely true, it was also a direct assault on the god-self. But as opposed to the frontal attack, parables are often set in comfortable, everyday agrarian settings, very familiar to the average listener. Perhaps, unlike the Pharisees, there was little overt ‘God talk’ that often ended in the judgment, ‘unclean.’ In fact the parables often had no conclusion, explanation, and certainly no ‘alter call.’ The listener was left to contemplate on the neutral story. As R. Alan Culpepper says, they “tease the mind into activity...parables require the hearer to (1) ‘break the grip of tradition; and (2) ‘discover new meaning.’”²²

It is easy to imagine the 1st century listener, walking away, scratching his head, and then giving up for a while. But perhaps the next day while planting seed in his field, he might wonder, “the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field? How is that possible? What does that mean?” And perhaps as he worked his field, slowly, it would start to make sense. Perhaps as he pondered other parables, the ‘light would come on’, and he would start to see Israel in the parable. And most importantly he would even see himself. *‘Wait a minute...hey! He was talking about ME!’* Parables allow the speaker to make statements that might otherwise be too confrontational, both for those in authority that would not change, and for those who would accept His teachings.

Peterson says,

²¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor, Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 32.

²² R. Alan Culpepper, “A Word From...” *Review and Expositor* 109, no 2 (2012): 165.

“Parables subversively slip past our defenses. Once they’re inside the citadel of self, we might expect a change of method, a sudden brandishing of bayonets resulting in a palace coup. But it doesn’t happen. Our integrity is honored and preserved. God does not impose His reality from without; He grows flowers and fruit from within. God’s love is not an alien invasion but a loving courtship.”²³

Parables are like time bombs, skillfully set inside the defenses of self. And when, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, they open our eyes to two new truths. First, the status quo is wrong and must be overthrown. Second, the Kingdom of God is now, and will be.²⁴ Parables point to another reality that we have never seen with human eye and force us to confront our reality as inadequate and unsatisfactory. As Klyne R. Snodgrass says of parables, “Like the prophets before Him, Jesus used parables to confront the nation and provide insight, especially with regard to the new thing God was doing in the coming of the kingdom.”²⁵

In an advertisement in *Preaching Today* for Michael J. Quicke’s book *360 Degree Preaching*, there is a mock sermon consisting of only three lines: ‘God is Holy – God is Separate – we are to be separate.’²⁶ Amen! This is an absolutely theologically correct message. But does it “... translate the living Word into language that is fresh, clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing.”?²⁷ Of course not – and Jesus, communicating through parables, also communicates to us that the way we preach is as important as is the message we bring.

²³ Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 33.

²⁴ Ibid, 34.

²⁵ Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Key Questions on the Parables of Jesus,” *Review and Expositor* 109, no 2 (2012): 175.

²⁶ Michael Quicke, “Relevant Preaching is More Than PowerPoint,” *Preaching Today Magazine* 21.5 (2006): 79.

²⁷ David A. Enyart, *Creative Anticipation: Narrative Sermon Designs for Telling the Story* (Xlibris Press, 2002) 44.

Parables were generally brief which communicates that duration of the message is important. Parables were most often stories that the audience could relate to and thus remember, which communicates the necessity of building a bridge between the text and the congregation. Parables often end with an unexpected twist, which communicates to us the need to shape the message to keep the interest of the audience. Most parables are Theocentric, which speaks to us that the method must never become more important than the message. As Boucher says of message and method, “Parables are literature, to be sure, but they are certainly not poetry for it never happens that the aesthetic structures in them gain ascendancy.”²⁸ Parables were also subversive, which communicates to us that we too must be subtle and prepare our sermons carefully and well.

Did Jesus sit quietly and think through His messages in advance? Did He write and rewrite in His mind until the parable was perfect? Or did He just know? We will never know. But we can draw some conclusions from what we do know of Jesus’ use of parables, and also principles that should affect the way we teach and preach.

The use of parable forces the listener into an engagement with the teaching. A listener, who is truly interested in learning from the Master, would be required to move from passive listener to active participant. This of course maximizes the teaching moment, which is the objective of every good teacher who cares about those he or she teaches.

Ron Crawford, speaking of parables and their application to how contemporary pastors might better preach says,

²⁸ Madeleine Boucher, “The Mysterious Parable: A Literary Study,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly-Monograph Series* 6 (1977): 16.

“Let the story carry the theology... There is something profoundly seductive about a good story; someone starts telling a story and we find ourselves gravitationally pulled into the story.”²⁹

Is this not the hope of every contemporary preacher? Just as Jesus desired to communicate great and difficult truths in order to cause life change, is this not our desire as well? If so, as I believe it should be, then it seems logical that we might use some of the same methods and techniques.

Finally, parables were a natural and effective bridge between the teacher and those Jesus was trying to reach. A common characteristic of the parable is the commonality of experience, images, and humanity that translates to relatability. Likewise, if we are to preach effectively, in accordance with the example of the master teacher, then it would seem we will have to prepare and use every available tool to engage our community of faith, build bridges between the biblical text, ourselves, and our congregation in order to maximize the sermon moment.

Preaching in the Book of Acts

Seventeen times in the Book of Acts the word “preach” is used, as well as many more references to teaching about Jesus or arguing against those who refused to believe in Him. But similar to the Old Testament prophet, there is not a direct comment with regard to a follower of Jesus preparing a message or shaping the Gospel in any particular way.

The first five sermons in the Book of Acts, (Acts 2:22-41, 3:12-26, 4:8-12, 5:29-32, and 5:42) are all very similar and all delivered by the Apostle Peter. These sermons emphasized Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, as the resurrected Lord and King. Most

²⁹ Ron Crawford, “A Word About...Stories and Embodied Truth,” *Review and Expositor* 109, no 2 (2012): 169.

of these sermons also ended with a call to repentance, as seen in Acts 2:38, “Peter said to them, Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

In these initial sermons, no insight is offered as to how the messages were prepared. Additionally, there is no special consideration given with regard to the audience. This is likely because the sermons were preached to those who knew what had happened to Jesus, and Peter did not have to establish the setting or provide additional information. The emphasis seems to be entirely on the Holy Spirit.

For instance, in Acts 4:8, the scripture says of the preacher, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, rulers and elders of the people.” From this point forward, Peter preaches an incredible and profound sermon, seemingly beyond the capabilities of a Galilean fisherman. In fact, in verse 13 their lack of education and training, as compared to the power of their preaching, are some of the very things that make their preaching effective. Verse 13 says,

“Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.”

The majority of examples within the New Testament emphasize being reliant on the Holy Spirit in the moment. This is reminiscent of Acts 6:9-10 that says,

“Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) - Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.”

Stephen was appointed to supervise the care of the poor, not necessarily to preach the Gospel, for which he likely had little training. Yet his reliance on the Holy Spirit gave him extraordinary power as he preached, so no one could argue against him.

This seems to speak to the contemporary preacher as well. As tempting as it might be to rely on style, technique, or other communication skills, we must always confess that, without the wisdom and blessing of the Holy Spirit, we are powerless and will ultimately be ineffective.

There are a few other references to preaching in the Book of Acts such as 11:19-21 and 13:5, although little additional comment or insight can be gained from these. Acts 13:16-41 provides one of the best examples of Paul preaching to the Jews, as recorded by Luke.

In this passage, Paul is clearly aware of his audience, which is both Jew and Gentile believers. Because of this, Paul finds it necessary to narrate the history of Israel. J. Bradley Chance, states that it is important to note not only what is said, but also how. Whether his speech represents deliberative rhetoric, (persuade to take action) or epideictic rhetoric, (praise and blame), which is debated, it is clear that Paul is using his rhetorical skills to build a bridge and reach a specific audience.³⁰

Although there is no direct reference, this is not to say that the New Testament ‘preacher’ did not consider his audience as he spoke. Perhaps one of the greatest examples of this is found in Acts 17 as Paul addresses the men of Athens. Verse 22 says,

“So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. **23** For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.”

By beginning in this way, Paul is attempting to build a bridge between the gospel and his audience. He continues in verse 27 saying,

³⁰ J. Bradley Chance. *Acts: Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing Inc., 2007), 215.

“that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, "For we also are His children.”

J. Bradley Chance, in his commentary on the Book of Acts says of this passage,

“Paul begins his sermon by seeking to establish a positive relationship with his audience. The narrator makes clear that Paul was personally incensed at the many idols that confronted him in the agora, but Paul refrains from any kind of tirade that would serve only to alienate his listeners.”³¹

Paul quotes two maxims from their Greek poets. The first (“For in him we live and move and have our being”) comes from the Cretan poet Epimenides (c. 600 B.C.). The second (“for we are his offspring”), is from the Cilician poet Aratus (c. 315-240 B.C.).³² By doing this Paul is blending into the hearer’s culture, without compromising the gospel.

Phil Johnson says of this passage,

“He adopted the worldview and communications style of his hearers. He observed their religion and listened to their beliefs and learned from them before he tried to teach them. And he didn't step on their toes by refuting what they believed. Instead, he took their idea of the unknown god, embraced that, and used it as the starting point for his message about Christ.”³³

To establish such a positive relation, it was important for Paul to consider his audience and adapt the gospel, without compromising it. This would seem to be an important characteristic for contemporary preachers as well.

³¹ J. Bradley Chance. *Acts: Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing Inc., 2007), 317.

³² Kenneth L. Barker and John Kohlenberger, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004). CD-ROM, 5.17.0014.

³³ Phil Johnson, *Paul on Mars Hill (Part 1): A Short Introduction to a Series of Posts on Acts 17:22-34*, Pyromaniacs: Setting the World on Fire, <http://www.teampyro.org/2008/03/paul-on-mars-hill-part-1.html> (accessed May 29, 2012).

The Preaching of Paul in the Epistles

As I considered biblical texts with regard to the preaching of Paul, I again noted a continuous emphasis on relying on the Holy Spirit, as opposed to any great level of preparation or cleverness of speech. As an example the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:17 says, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.”

In this passage, Paul seems to be comparing two types of public speaking. The first type, which was common in that day, was the study of rhetoric and required extensive preparatory education and practice. The second type of public speaking that Paul seems to compare, is impromptu preaching that relied on the Spirit to provide guidance in that moment.

Robert Scott Nash, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, compares the two styles in this way,

“His (Paul’s) preaching was not in sophisticated speech for that would “empty” the cross of Christ. How? Such speech reveals a regard for, a reliance upon, and an enslavement to a system of valuation that holds no place for the power of God at work in the world through the self-defaming cross of Christ and its proclamation. Relying upon the power of speech to manipulate thought and action closes the door to the transforming work of God’s Spirit. The end result is a perpetual enslavement to a system dominated by those who have learned the art of manipulation through language.”³⁴

Intuitively it seems logical that a preacher would desire to identify and use every effective tool to communicate best the gospel of Jesus Christ. Can we not compare effective communication skills alongside an excellent knowledge of the bible and quality hermeneutic skills? Paul, although he seems to emphasize preaching as guided by the Spirit, had been prepared the majority of his life as a student of the scriptures in

³⁴ Robert Scott Nash, *1 Corinthians: Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon, GA : Smyth & Helwys Publishing Inc., 2009), 88.

preparation for his duties as a Pharisee. It seems intuitively obvious that more preparation is far superior to less.

But, as often is the case, intuition can be flawed and may lead us in a wrong direction. A review of the scripture on this topic identifies a warning; over reliance on rhetorical skills may in fact result in powerless and ineffective preaching.

W. Harold Mare, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, says,

“His (Paul’s) method was to preach not with words of human wisdom, i.e., not with the cleverness of human argumentation (such as the methods used by philosophers like Plato and Aristotle). If he were to depend on human argument, the heart of the message of the cross would be emptied of its essential meaning.”³⁵

Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 9:22 the Apostle Paul says, “To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.” This too would imply that understanding the audience, and then adapting the message to best communicate, is an essential element of effective preaching. It seems the example of Paul and other preachers of the New Testament is to be prepared, rely on the power and instruction of the Holy Spirit, but also understand the audience and build the most effective bridge that is possible.

Preaching in Christian History

Although there have been many great and influential preachers through the centuries, perhaps John Chrysostom and Augustine of Hippo are at the pinnacle of the early church fathers. Likewise, Martin Luther and John Calvin represent a dramatic shift, as well as iconic preachers in the time of the Reformation. These preachers, along side

³⁵ Kenneth L. Barker and John Kohlenberger, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004). CD-ROM, 5.17.0014.

contemporary preachers such as Long and Enyart, were examined in order to discover insights into effective preaching.

The Preaching of John Chrysostom (347–407)

Any preacher that is given the title of the “one with the golden mouth” is certainly a man whose sermons must be considered when studying the Church Fathers. It is said that when Chrysostom was called to a position of greater leadership in the church, away from his congregation, there were riots and cries of, "Better let the sun cease to shine than stop that golden mouth!"³⁶ David F. Wright writes of Chrysostom, "He counts among the greatest preachers in the whole history of the church."³⁷

John Chrysostom lived from 347-407AD and served the church in many capacities, from being tonsured as a reader in Antioch, ordained as a deacon, priest and ultimately as Archbishop of Constantinople.³⁸ Over his lifetime of service, Chrysostom preached not only a great number of sermons, but many of which lasted over two hours. Some 800 of these sermons are available to us today. In fact for much of his ministry he was so busy he had no time to write his sermons, but rather they were preserved by scribes who recorded them as he spoke. That is not to say that Chrysostom did not prepare long and well.

John Chrysostom was deeply concerned about connecting with his congregation. He built sermonic bridges, as did Jesus in the parables, between the text and the situation of the common man. As Fant and Pinson state,

³⁶ Edwin C. Dargan, *A History of Preaching*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Fathers to the Great Reformers*, A.D. 70-1572, with an introduction by J. B. Weatherspoon, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), 90.

³⁷ David F. Wright, "John Chrysostom," *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*, John D. Woodbridge, gen. ed., (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 81.

³⁸ Edwin C. Dargan, *From the Apostolic Fathers to the Great Reformers*, A.D. 70-1572, *A History of Preaching*, vol. 1, with an introduction by J. B. Weatherspoon (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), 65.

“Chrysostom's great strength lay in his ability to apply scriptural truth to existing situations. He was amazingly relevant and aware of the world about him. He could speak about the games, the problems of wealth or poverty, the various forms of heathen idolatry, public conduct in the forum, or any one of a number of other social conditions. His preaching seems to have thrust itself boldly into the area of public affairs.”³⁹

Additionally, his sermons were engaging and beautiful. Chrysostom used his rhetorical skills to appeal not only to the congregation's intelligence, but also to their emotions. During his years living as an ascetic he had memorized much of the Bible. Chrysostom was therefore able to draw on his deep knowledge of the scriptures, and combine this with his excellent rhetorical skills. He began to learn rhetorical skills as a child from his pagan teacher Libanius, and from whom he also gained a love of Greek.⁴⁰

Take for example a beautiful and engaging homily written by Chrysostom,

“Practice prayer from the beginning. Paint your house with the colors of modesty and humility. Make it radiant with the light of justice. Decorate it with the finest gold leaf of good deeds. Adorn it with the walls and stones of faith and generosity. Crown it with the pinnacle of prayer. In this way you will make it a perfect dwelling place for the Lord. You will be able to receive him as in a splendid palace, and through his grace you will already possess him, his image enthroned in the temple of your spirit.”⁴¹

It seems that Chrysostom desired, and was able to use every communication tool available to him. From reading both his sermons, and commentators, it seems that his tools were both numerous and great. Philip Schaff says of John Chrysostom that,

“As one reads his sermons and hears descriptions of them by contemporaries, one gets the very distinct impression that he was a master of inflection and gestures, which kept the audience almost in a state of rapture. It is no wonder, following the custom of the day, that at the end of his sermons, the audience often would break out in wild applause and stamp their feet.”⁴²

³⁹ Clyde E. Fant, Jr. & William M. Pinson, Jr., *20 Centuries of Great Preaching: An Encyclopedia of Preaching*, vol. 1: Biblical Sermons to Saonarola (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976), 58.

⁴⁰ Robert Louis Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late Fourth Century*, (Berkeley: University of California Press:1983), 5.

⁴¹ Unknown Author. *Liturgy of the Hours*, Vol. II, (Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1976) 68.

⁴² Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. III., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity*, 5th ed. revised (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, reprinted 1977), 938.

John Chrysostom wrote, *On the Priesthood*, and devoted a great deal of it to the subject of preaching. With regard to the preparation of sermons, he wrote to his fellow preachers to do the necessary “toil” required for excellence. For Chrysostom that toil seemed to clearly involve a depth of knowledge of the scriptures, his congregation, and the culture in which he lived. He used every tool available to him to include emotional drama, dialogs between himself and the congregation, and changes in inflection as well as theatrical gestures.⁴³

Perhaps his own words best summarize his passion for preaching and set a high standard for contemporary preachers to emulate: “I treat of so many things in each of my sermons and make them so varied because I want everybody to find something special in it and not go home empty-handed.”⁴⁴

The Preaching of Augustine of Hippo (354-386)

One of the most impressive preachers of the early church fathers was Augustine. Augustine preached for almost forty years and it is estimated that he preached over 8000 sermons. He often preached twice a week, often on several consecutive days, and sometimes twice in the one day.⁴⁵ Perhaps his love of preaching, and understanding of its importance, came from the fact that Augustine was led into a relationship with Christ through the preaching of Ambrose.

⁴³ Joel Pless, *Seven Pulpit Paradigms from the Prince of Preachers: John Chrysostom*, <http://www.wlssays.net/files/PlessPulpit.pdf> (accessed November 27, 2012).

⁴⁴ David F. Wright, "John Chrysostom," *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*, ed. John D. Woodbridge, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 84

⁴⁵ *The Preaching Method of Augustine*, Augnet, <http://www.augnet.org/default.asp?ipageid=1087> (accessed May 29, 2012).

As Augustine listened to Ambrose's sermons, something unexpected occurred.

He writes,

“Together with the language, which I admired, the subject matter also, to which I was indifferent, began to enter into my mind. Indeed I could not separate the one from the other. And as I opened my heart in order to recognize how eloquently he was speaking it occurred to me at the same time (though this idea came gradually) how truly he was speaking. First I began to see that the points which he made were capable of being defended.”⁴⁶

Augustine was one of the first to write about methods of preparation and delivery of sermons. For Augustine, three methods of delivery are to be used in good preaching: (1) quiet, or peaceful; (2) moderate; and (3) grandiose (or full-powered). All styles of delivery can be detected in the sermons of Augustine, but he expressly warns against the exclusive use any one style, especially the grandiose. He believed the listener would become exhausted, to say nothing of the preacher.

“No one should think that it is contrary to our teaching to blend these styles. On the contrary, delivery should be varied with every kind of style, in so far as this can be accomplished gracefully. When a speech is long and drawn out in one style, it does not hold the listener; when a change is made from one style to another, the speech proceeds more effectively, even though it is now longer (*De Doctrina Christiana* 22,51).”⁴⁷

Augustine believed that preachers need to establish contact between the congregation and themselves both on human and faith levels. He went out of his way to understand the congregation before preaching. His sermons were filled with examples taken from the lives of his congregation. He talked about the violence of society, problems facing married couples, and the dangers of excessive desires. He used the popular language of the day in order to effectively communicate with those he served.

⁴⁶ *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, The Harvard Classics.
<http://www.bartleby.com/7/1/5.html#txt37> (accessed June 8, 2012).

⁴⁷ *The Preaching Method of Augustine*, Augnet, <http://www.augnet.org/default.asp?ipageid=1087> (accessed May 29, 2012).

“When he described a tragedy which had happened to someone, they groaned in sympathy and he would thank them for their concern. If they applauded him for something which he said (or the way he said it), he replied that the source of the good which he uttered was God, not him. Sometimes he had to chide them, to calm them down because they reacted with moans and groans, and sometimes they laughed. He enjoyed having them as an audience and they enjoyed being with him. He did not memorize his sermons but, after saturating himself with his subject, he spoke from the inspiration of the moment.”⁴⁸

Augustine often used the diatribe method of rhetoric, in which he would use an imaginary person and discuss the theme of the sermon with him.

“That is what he did with an imaginary fellow he named Felix, a name which in Latin meant ‘happy’, although Felix was shown to be *infelix* (unhappy), either because of evil actions or because of wrong belief. Hence Augustine - and his attentive audience - would review the reasons why Felix was not living up to his name.”⁴⁹

This last sentence seems to strike a powerful and important balance between preparation (knowing both the text and the audience) and being guided by the Spirit in the sermonic moment. Augustine realized this, practiced, and taught this in *De Doctrina Christiana*, (On Christian Doctrine in Four Books). This written work, which dates to the turn of the fifth century, was his effort to improve the quality of preaching.

The Preaching of Martin Luther (1483-1546)

The period of the Reformation brought great changes into the Christian pulpit.

Elmer Kiessling discusses the change that occurred in Reformation preaching in this way:

“The details of the art of sermonizing are all very well for ordinary men. That is why after Luther's time the solid body of homiletical wisdom, developed in part and transmitted by the pre-Reformation preachers, was appropriated and added to by those that followed after. But for a time the rules were in abeyance while the giants of the Reformation occupied the pulpits. Indeed, not the least of

⁴⁸ *The Preaching Method of Augustine*, Augnet, <http://www.augnet.org/default.asp?ipageid=1087> (accessed May 29, 2012).

⁴⁹ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo, A Biography*, (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 251.

their achievements was the creation of new rules to supplement the old. Preaching was never the same again...”⁵⁰

It is not easy to get a clear understanding of Luther’s philosophy of preaching in that. Yet we can synthesize some sort of hermeneutical practice of Luther by integrating his outlines, his comments on preaching, and the notes taken by members of his inner circle during the sermon.⁵¹

Johann Gerhard characterizes Luther’s sermonic structure as “heroic disorder.”⁵² His preparation consisted of plunging himself into the text until he had developed a sense of the “sinnmitte” (center of meaning), and a concept that would allow him to get the point across to the people. One of his favorite sermonic devices was to set up an antithesis in order to set things in opposition. Examples of this type of antithesis included the law/gospel, sin/grace, Satan/God, and bound will/free will.⁵³

Luther’s style of preaching was not a word by word, or verse by verse exposition but a conversation, sometimes dramatic, in order to communicate the main concept of the passage and to make Christians of the hearers through the preaching of the word. J.W.

O’Malley says that Luther’s preaching is marked by three things:

1. Clear and untiring repeated doctrine.
2. Clear isolation of enemies giving a sense of ‘present danger’ and therefore, urgency.
3. An agenda for the hearers that was specific and immediate, yet fraught with implications for a better order to come.⁵⁴

So was Luther one who would rely solely on the Spirit during the sermonic moment? Or was Luther one who prepared well in advance, using multiple genres and

⁵⁰ Elmer Carl Kiessling, *The Early Sermons of Luther and Their Relation to the Pre-Reformation Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1935), 146.

⁵¹ O.C. Edwards, *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 149.

⁵² Ibid, 167.

⁵³ Ibid, 169.

⁵⁴ J.W. O’Malley, *Luther the Preacher* (Detroit: Goldleaf Press, 1984), 63.

methods depending on the situation? In Luther, there seems to be a healthy combination of both. Luther was well trained in rhetoric and it is clear he took much time to prepare using the skills he developed over a life time. Yet in the end he took only an outline into the pulpit and was well known for diverging from the outline, yet never from the center of meaning.⁵⁵ As with many preachers already noted, he felt a freedom to be led by the Spirit in the sermonic moment. Yet the freedom seemed to come from thorough preparation, to include intimately knowing his congregation and their needs.

The Preaching of John Calvin (1509–1564)

A slightly later contemporary of Martin Luther, John Calvin was an incredibly prolific teacher and preacher. Theodore Beza describes his labors in this way,

“Besides preaching every day from week to week, usually and as often as he could he preached twice every Sunday; he lectured three times a week on theology; he gave remonstrances in the consistory, and delivered as it were an entire lesson every Friday in the conference on Scripture that we call a congregation; and he so closely followed this program without interruption until his death that he never failed once except in extreme illness.”⁵⁶

This feverish pace resulted in two thousand three hundred sermons which were preserved until the nineteenth century, and of which, fifteen hundred still exist.⁵⁷

Like the sermons of John Chrysostom, Calvin did not enter the pulpit with a finished text, but rather they were works of the moment. Bernard Cottret describes Calvin’s sermons as a “running linear commentary, or *lectio continua*.” Most of his recorded sermons were transcribed by listeners, rather than by his own hand.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ John W. Doberstein, *Luther's Works: American Edition* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), xvi.

⁵⁶ Bernard Cottret, *Calvin; a Biography*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 288.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 289.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 289.

Because of this “*lectio continua*”, Calvin was likely the most expository in style of all of the preachers thus far mentioned. As John Piper says,

“Everything was exposition of Scripture. This was the ministry unleashed by seeing the majesty of God in Scripture. The Scripture were absolutely central because they were absolutely the Word of God and had as their self-authenticating theme the majesty and glory of God. But out of all these labors of exposition, preaching was supreme.”⁵⁹

This is not to say that Calvin, like John Chrysostom, was not one to use every possible tool at his disposal to communicate great scriptural truths. Like Chrysostom, he could be comfortable and relaxed with the congregation or burning and demanding. He could use beautiful gestures or with a turn of the hand, bring to mind the wonder and beauty of creation. “Along with the changes of voice, dramatizations, and shifts to the first person singular, these gestures showed the animation of Calvin’s preaching.”⁶⁰

His own words specifically address the tension between reliance on the Spirit as opposed to the toil of preparation.

“It is as though I mounted the pulpit and did not deign to look at the book, but invented some frivolous fantasy and said, ‘ah well, when I come there, God will give me enough to talk about.’ And as though I did not deign to read or think carefully about what I would put forward and came here without having carefully considered how the holy Scriptures should be applied to the edification of the people; and I would be presumptuous, and God would also confound me in my audacity.”⁶¹

There seems to be some historical disagreement as to the preaching style of John Calvin. Cottret portrays him as a passionate, dramatic preacher able to use a great variety

⁵⁹ John Piper, *The Divine Majesty of the Word - John Calvin: The Man and His Preaching*, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/biographies/the-divine-majesty-of-the-word> (accessed November 27, 2012).

⁶⁰ Bernard Cottret, *Calvin; a Biography*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 293.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 294.

of methods to communicate the scriptures. On the other hand, Nathan W. Bingham says this of his preaching style,

“When expounding Scripture, Calvin was remarkably straightforward and to the point. He did not launch his message with a captivating story, a compelling quote, or a personal anecdote. Instead, Calvin immediately drew his listeners into the biblical text. The focus of the message was always Scripture, and he spoke what needed to be said with an economy of words. There were no wasted statements.”⁶²

It may be unclear who has the most historically accurate view of the preaching of John Calvin; Cottret or Bingham. What is apparent is that Calvin was clearly a passionate preacher and passionate writer about preaching. In the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* alone he mentions preaching some 994 times, so very often setting the preaching of the word along side the administration of the sacraments. He was familiar with rhetoric and the writings of Demosthenes, Cicero, Plato, and Aristotle. But Calvin had such high regard for the scriptures alone that it seems he believed they needed no complimentary material. Calvin states,

“For the truth is vindicated in opposition to every doubt, when, unsupported by foreign aid, it has its sole sufficiency in itself. How peculiarly this property belongs to Scripture appears from this, that no human writings, however skillfully composed, are at all capable of affecting us in a similar way.”⁶³

Such a high view of the scriptures is certainly admirable. But such a high view was also accompanied by a high level of preparation. It seems that Calvin thought it would be an affront to God for him to step into the pulpit unprepared. His reliance on the

⁶² Nathan W. Bingham, *10 Distinguishing Marks of John Calvin's Preaching*, <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/10-distinguishing-marks-john-calvins-preaching/> (accessed November 30, 2012).

⁶³ Henry Beveridge, *Institutes of the Christian Religion by John Calvin: A New Translation*, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.titlepage.html?highlight=institutes,of,the,christian,religion#highlight> (accessed November 30, 2012).

Spirit, incredible preparation, and passion for the people and preaching, make him a man truly worthy of emulation.

It does appear historically clear that there were significant stylistic differences between Calvin and Luther. Luther said of preaching,

“When he preaches on any article, he must first distinguish it, then define, describe, and show what it is; thirdly, he must produce sentences from the Scripture to prove and strengthen it; fourthly, he must explain it by examples; fifthly, he must *adorn it* with similitudes; and, lastly, he must admonish and arouse the indolent, correct the disobedient, and reprove false doctrine.”⁶⁴

Calvin on the other hand would likely have felt adornment unnecessary and inappropriate as he believed it be “pretentious grandiloquence.” Rather Calvin believed that the exposition of the word was paramount.⁶⁵

Calvin did not illustrate in the way Luther did. Luther would use stories from life believing we all participated in the divine drama. For instance, from one of his sermons, he says,

“Nobody took pity on this young woman who was about to give birth for the first time; nobody took to heart the heaviness of her body; nobody cared that she was in strange surroundings and did not have any of the things which a woman in childbirth needs. Rather she was there without anything ready, without light, without fire, in the middle of the night, alone in the darkness.”⁶⁶

These kinds of stories gave Luther’s sermons a much more narrative quality, something not found in the sermons of Calvin.

⁶⁴ T. Harwood Pattison, *The History of Christian Preaching* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1903), 54.

⁶⁵ Marvin Anderson, *John Calvin: Biblical Preacher*, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 42 (August 1989), 172-173.

⁶⁶ Hans J. Hillerbrand, *Luther's Works, Volume 52: Sermons II*, American Edition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 10-11.

Does Cottret or Bingham have the greater insight into the preaching style of John Calvin? Perhaps in their historical disagreement, there is a subtle and important truth about preaching; expository and narrative styles need not be polar and exclusive opposites. From my reading of Calvin, and personal observations of many preachers over the last 30 years, I realize that the best expository preachers are ones that will also blend in short stories to engage the congregation. On the other hand, a narrative sermon that is not based on diligent expository spadework is just a story and likely not fit to preach.

Contemporary Commentary on Preaching

Historically, we know there are examples of preachers who were terrifically effective, but today might be categorized as ineffective communicators. Dr. R. L. Hymers, Jr., in his sermon, *‘Preachers Who Were Strangely Different!’* states,

“Dr. A. W. Tozer had a way of whistling through his false teeth when he spoke. Pastor Richard Wurmbrand had to take off his shoes and sit on a chair – because of scars on the bottoms of his feet from beatings given by Communist guards when he was in prison in Romania. He spoke with a heavy accent, somewhat difficult to understand. Dr. John R. Rice was a quaint little man with a “snuffle” in his speech that made him quite hard to understand, especially as he grew older. But even in deep old age, all of them could hold the attention of several thousand people at a time in large meetings. What was their secret?”

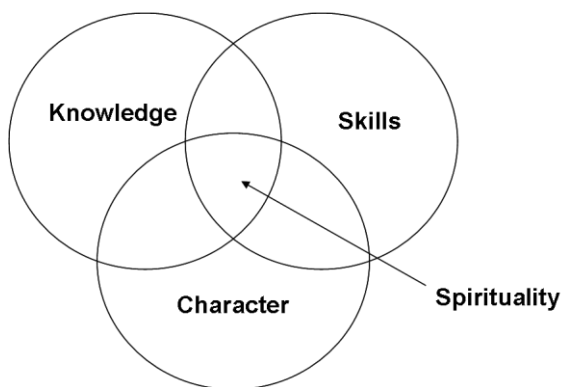
‘I think they were powerful preachers for two reasons; first they were in dead earnest when they spoke. There was never any slipshod pandering, or jokes to “warm up” an audience. People could tell “This man really means what he says.” That goes a long way toward holding the attention of an audience. Tozer, Rice and Wurmbrand all had that quality. They were so serious that it made you almost afraid not to give them your

full attention. Secondly, they were men who prayed a great deal, and you could feel the weight of God when they spoke.”⁶⁷

Could it be that the techniques that are highly valued today for effective communicators could actually be a hindrance to the preaching of the gospel?

As mentioned earlier, 2 Timothy 4:2 states that the preacher must “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.” Being ready would seem to require the preparation of knowing the biblical material, the audience to who it will be offered, while at the same time communicating effectively, using all available tools.

Michael J. Quicke, in his book *360 Degree Preaching* describes his understanding of preaching using a three circles model.

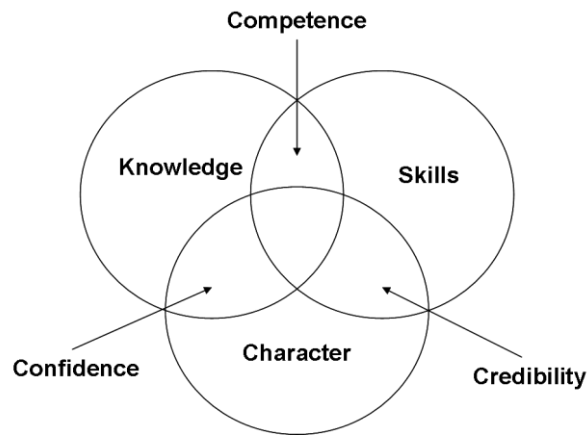


He says, based upon his personal experience, in observation of other preachers, and the perfect model of Jesus as Quicke understands it, “Preaching should flow out of these three integrated aspects of a preacher’s spirituality. Preaching is an overflow of who a preacher is. The spiritual life is ordinary, everyday life lived in an ever-deepening and loving relationship with God and therefore to one’s true or healthy self, all people

⁶⁷ R. L. Hymers, Jr., *A Sermon Preached at the Baptist Tabernacle of Los Angeles Lord’s Day Evening, March 1, 2009*, http://rlhymersjr.com/Online_Sermons/2009/030109PM_StrangelyDifferent.html (accessed May 29, 2012).

and the whole of creation.”⁶⁸ Quicke seems to be saying that skills are an essential element of preaching, although at the heart of it must be our spiritual relationship with God.

Quicke then builds off of this diagram adding three additional elements:



He says,

“The three circles are drawn together as a preacher consciously develops competence, credibility, and confidence. These qualities need to grow through practice and reflection, and each represents an integration of different parts of the preacher’s life.”⁶⁹

Quicke implies that the process of becoming an effective preacher requires deliberate practice, reflection, and adjustments to optimize the sermonic moment.

Thomas G. Long seems to concur with Quicke. He says of quality preaching,

“Such preaching requires study, practice, and hard work, but this does not mean that preaching is merely a matter of acquired technique. Preaching is in fact an alloy of art and craft, gift and training – something like playing the piano. Preaching requires such gifts as sensitivity to human need, a discerning eye for connections between faith and life, an ear attuned to hearing the voice of the scripture, compassion, a growing faith, and the courage to tell the truth.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Micheal J. Quicke, *360 Degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking and Living the Word*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 89.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 96.

⁷⁰ Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989.)

So for Long, preaching is both the ability to listen to and be guided by the Spirit, as well as a matter of learning and acquiring technique. Additionally, as with many great writers on preaching, he sees the need for adapting the preaching style to the context of the congregation.

Theological Reconstruction

Returning to the words of David A. Enyart, he states “Preaching is communication wherein an authentic and dedicated believer translates the living Word into language that is fresh, clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing.”⁷¹ Therefore, the core question seems to be, what is the best method for communicating such a message?

The prophets of the Old Testament used a tremendous variety of creative means to communicate a message from God. But there is no indication that the prophets were the initiators of such creativity, but rather relied on the guiding of the Spirit entirely. Yet it is clear that everything dedicated to God should be prepared to the highest possible standard.

The teaching/preaching of Jesus is a difficult comparison for the contemporary preacher to make. We are not privy to how or if He prepared His messages – or if He needed to. Yet Jesus’ great use of parables does seem to send a message to the contemporary preacher with regard to duration, relatability, and the need to build a bridge between the text and the congregation, often in creative and even subversive ways. We do not have the abilities or gifts of our Savior. But, we can emulate both His reliance on

⁷¹ David A. Enyart, *Creative Anticipation: Narrative Sermon Designs for Telling the Story*, (Xlibris Press, 2002), 44.

the Father and the creative methods Jesus used, through our preparation – which can also be guided by the Spirit.

It would seem that we would be most effective if we emulated the Master Teacher's method. Unfortunately we do not have His insight, and therefore we must study, analyze and determine to the best of our ability what is most effective for our congregation.

The Apostle Paul is also one who seemed to understand the importance of interdependency of reliance on the Spirit and adapting the message to meet the needs of an audience. Although Paul may have never thought about creative preparation for a message, his entire life was one of preparation and thus it was likely second nature to him.

Augustine was so concerned with the importance and quality of preaching that he dedicated the fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana* to the topic. Augustine used a great variety of methods to communicate great scriptural truths. He too, as well as Luther, understood a necessary balance between guidance of the Holy Spirit and preparation for the sermon moment, to include great variety of genre, strength of voice, and interaction with the community of faith.

The biblical testimony and personal experience both agree that without the inspired words of the Spirit, our preaching will be without power. As John Calvin said,

“I speak, but I must also listen to myself, being taught by the spirit of God; since otherwise the words that proceed from my mouth would not profit me any more than all the others, unless they were given to me from on high and not from my own head. Therefore it is only a sound that vanishes in the air, the voice of a man.”⁷²

⁷² Bernard Cottret, *Calvin; a Biography*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 288.

The conclusion, drawn from scripture and most contemporary writers on preaching, is that preaching is a skill that must be developed, analyzed and fine tuned in order to be the most effective communicator of the gospel. An over reliance on technique will make us no more than hollow actors. Yet an under emphasis on style, method, and technique is to do injustice to the sermonic moment and potentially waste our preparation time and the congregation's time as well. To do so not only wastes time but very well might discourage the congregation from participating in future communal times of worship.

Additionally, the goal is not to build a sermonic template. Such an attempt would ultimately become boring and ineffective over time. But by analyzing moments of connectivity we can identify the principles that maximize effectiveness.

In summary, it seems to me that a reliance on the Holy Spirit is an essential 'given' with regard to preaching. Without this, we are not an "authentic and dedicated believer" able to "translate the living Word."⁷³ But to be "fresh, clear, interesting, and relevant" we must know what does and does not communicate effectively to our congregation.

⁷³ David A. Enyart, *Creative Anticipation: Narrative Sermon Designs for Telling the Story*. (Xlibris Press, 2002), 44.

CHAPTER FOUR

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The critical analysis section of this study includes a description of a modification from the initial plan, observations with regard to the four methods of feedback, and an explanation of the sermon effectiveness graphs. Additionally, a week by week analysis of each of the first four sermons is provided.

Analysis of each sermon includes: analysis of the long term memory surveys, short term memory surveys, electronic feedback, and biometric feedback. Analysis of long and short term memory surveys includes comparisons against the baseline survey results, as well as the other three sermons.

Electronic feedback identifies those points in the sermon where feedback was especially high. Direct quotes from the sermon are included in this section in order to provide some insight to the cause of the high evaluations. Biometric feedback is addressed in each sermon analysis. Additionally, a sermon effectiveness graph is provided for each sermon. This graph provides a visual representation of all four feedback methods. Discussion with regard to the sermon effectiveness graph also highlights the effect of demographics on the participant's responses.

Additionally, a summary analysis of each sermon is provided, by week. In this section, additional analysis is provided with regard to especially valuable insights that were gained during the study.

Finally, the elements that were applied in the fifth message are identified and discussed. The fifth sermon is then analyzed in the same way as the previous four.

Modifications from the Initial Project Description

As implementation of the project began, I felt it necessary to reduce the length of the study from six to five weeks. The initial plan for four sermons of various styles did not change. The initial plan for the final two sermons, (the application of lessons learned from the first four weeks), were applied in one final sermon.

The reason for this change was due to feedback from the congregation that the study was bothersome for some of those that were not participating. Although I tried to make the project as invisible as possible, it was cumbersome to some and perhaps inhibited worship. Therefore I reduced the project from six to five weeks.

The reduction of the project from six to five weeks proved inconsequential to the overall outcome. The overall results, which will be discussed later, were overwhelmingly clear and answered the initial question posed by the study.

Analysis of the Forms of Feedback in Perceived Order of Value

The initial objective was to have four different types of sermon feedback in order to receive the best possible insight into how each sermon was received and measure its effectiveness. As the project began, I realized that not all feedback was providing the same quality which was hoped for. In fact, some feedback was of minimal value. The following include comments about the effectiveness of each type of feedback in perceived order of value.

Post Sermon Surveys: Long Term Memory. These surveys were the most useful in determining the effectiveness of the sermon. David A. Enyart states, “Preaching is communication wherein an authentic and dedicated believer translates the living Word

into language that is fresh, clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing.”⁷⁴ In order to be life changing, the sermon must be heard, remembered, and applied.

The Long Term Memory Surveys were filled out no earlier than the Wednesday following the sermon and returned no later than the following Sunday. Therefore, comments made on the survey represented memories that at least survived beyond the initial memory decay of short term memory. When combining the questions answered on the Likert scale, and specific comments made by responders, the Long Term Memory Surveys provided the best insights into the effectiveness of each sermon.

Between 13 and 20 individuals responded every week using the Long Term Survey. Of these, 55% were women and 45% were men. Out of all the respondents, 60% were 56 years and older, 20% were between 46 and 55, and 20% were between 36 and 45 years old.

Post Sermon Surveys: Short Term Memory. Unlike the Long Term Memory Surveys, the Short Term Memory Surveys were completed immediately after the Sunday morning worship service. On average this was no more than 10 minutes after completion of the sermon.

There was no significant weakness of the Short Term Memory Surveys. Both the Likert scale questions and the additional comments provided quality insights. The Long Term Memory Surveys were simply more valued in that they represent memory retention.

Both surveys provided quality insights as well as some frustrating feedback. The old adage, “You can not please everyone” was certainly proven in these surveys. In

⁷⁴ David A. Enyart, *Creative Anticipation: Narrative Sermon Designs for Telling the Story*. (Xlibris Press, 2002), 44.

response to the same sermon I received such comments as, “Let go! We are Baptists, but we can take it!” and “I felt like you were yelling at us today.” In response to another sermon I received comments that said, “We love your Army stories – they bring the sermon to life” and “You tell too many Army stories.” This is discussed at greater length in the conclusion.

Between 12 and 18 individuals responded every week using the Short Term Survey. Of these, 60% were women and 40% were men. Out of all the respondents, 60% were 56 years and older, 25% were between 46 and 55, and 15% were between 36 and 45 years old.

Simultaneous Sermon Feedback. This was the first of the four methods of feedback that was not as effective as hoped. As stated previously, Simultaneous Sermon Feedback was gathered by asking 20 responders to text a “+”, “-”, or “=” approximately every 90 seconds during the sermon. The plus sign indicated a high degree of involvement, an equal sign indicated a moderate degree, and a minus sign indicated a low degree of involvement.

Each text message had a “time hack” so that responses could be linked to what was going on at a specific moment in the sermon. This information was then correlated and plotted on a line graph.

Although this guidance was provided to participants in written form, explained and demonstrated orally, and re-explained on subsequent occasions, the number of individual responses per sermon varied greatly. Some responders provided as few as three responses while others provided as many as thirty-three. This does not mean that

the data was without value. The responses were still given numerical values and plotted on a chart. But, it was not as uniform or continuous as I had initially hoped.

Between 12 and 19 individuals responded every week using the Simultaneous Sermon Feedback. Of these, 52% were women and 48% were men. The average age of all respondents was 34 years old with the range being from 54 to 23 years old.

The Short and Long Term Memory Survey respondents were generally slightly older than those selected for Simultaneous Sermon Feedback. I believed this to be necessary in order to utilize the technological skills of a slightly younger generation for the Simultaneous Sermon Feedback.

In short, the demographics of both the Long and Short Term Survey respondents were very similar, while the demographics of the Simultaneous Sermon Feedback respondents were 15 to 20 years younger. Roughly an equal proportion of men and women were represented in all three categories. An analysis of age differences is provided in the analysis of each sermon.

Biometrics Captured on Film. Of the four feedback methods, Biometrics Captured on Film was clearly the greatest disappointment. A ‘snap shot’ was taken every 90 seconds with each picture given a numeric value and plotted on line graph. The numeric value was based on individuals within the congregation who were judged to be *‘Disengaged’*, *‘Observing’*, or *‘Engaged’*. Evaluation was based upon body language, eye contact, and facial expression as recorded on film.

After the first week of recording, I realized the difficulty of positioning the cameras close enough to record facial expressions, but not so close as to be noticeable

and obtrusive to worship. During the second week cameras were repositioned, but again I found the feedback method to be of minimal value.

The reality is that it was far more difficult to visually assess sermon effectiveness than I initially thought. Initially I believed this feedback method would be the most effective. The great difficulty, which I determined while assigning numeric values to each snapshot, was that there was little significant difference at any point in the sermon. Those that were initially engaged generally appeared to stay engaged. The minority that was not initially engaged would occasionally look up at a loud noise, an increase in volume, or at the use of humor, but would generally remain unengaged.

Additionally, after comparing this feedback method to others, I realized those that seemed unengaged at some moments were able to identify exactly what was going on in the sermon, according to their written surveys. It therefore seems not only possible, but likely, that although an individual appeared to be unengaged, they were in fact having a quiet and meaningful moment.

For instance, if an individual was especially touched by a specific point, physically they might lower their head, appearing to disconnect from the sermon, but actually they might be meditating on that one point. Externally, it may appear they are wandering, but internally they might very well be having an insightful and meaningful moment.

Conversely, someone might maintain eye contact, and be completely disconnected from the sermon. As a side, and somewhat humorous note, one young teen, understanding the purpose of the cameras literally stared directly at the camera without

moving for 32 continuous minutes. Although impressive eye contact, I assume he received little from the sermon.

In hindsight, it may have been possible to pre-test a subset of the congregation with regard to their body language and their sermon interaction to determine when the correlation between the two was high or low. With the results of the pre-test, they could then be compared to the responses for the five weeks of the study. Because of the complexity level, this would require recording a portion of the congregation, rather than attempting to record and analyze the entire congregation.

Recordings could also have been made specifically of those that provided electronic feedback to identify when their interaction was high or low. Although this could have been accomplished, it would be somewhat redundant to gather two types of feed back from one group.

In the end, determining sermon engagement through physical observations was much more complex and difficult than I originally anticipated. Although this form of feedback provided disappointingly little feedback, the results are included along side of the other three.

Explanation of Sermon Effectiveness Graphs (Appendices F, H, J, L, and N)

Data were placed on the Sermon Effectiveness Graphs in different ways, depending on the feedback instrument.

Long and Short Term Surveys: When a comment on a survey was a direct quote, or close to a direct quote from the sermon, the time was determined when the quote was made and a point annotated against that time on the graph timeline. Multiple

comments about specific points were cumulative and identified periods of both high and low connectivity.

Biometrics captured on film: A numeric value was assigned to every 60-90 second “snap shot” of the congregation. The numeric value was based on individuals within the congregation that were judged to be *‘Disengaged’* (1 point), *‘Observing’* (2 points), or *‘Engaged’* (3 points). These cumulative scores were also annotated to the graph.

Simultaneous Sermon Feedback: Twenty individuals in the congregation were asked to provide constant feedback of their level of engagement measured through electronic devices (texting). These individuals were asked to text a “+”, “=”, or a “-“ between 15 and 30 times during the sermon. A “+” was valued at 3 points, “=” at two points and a “-“ at one point. Each text message also provided a “time hack” that was then correlated and plotted on the line graph. An example of a graph with annotated numeric values is at Appendix R.

The scores used to build the five graphs are not standardized scores. In other words, the Electronic Feedback scores are no more important on the graph than the Biometric Feedback, although the numeric value may be higher. The purposes of the graphs are to identify at what points in the sermon were there either low or high levels of connectedness between the congregation and the sermon. This is especially apparent when multiple forms of feedback are either consistently high or low at specific points. These intersections will be discussed in detail in the Analysis of Sermons by Week.

Analysis of Sermons by Week
Week 1 (9 Sept)

Style	Defined As	Additional Factors
Narrative (story telling)	A narrative exposition of a biblical concept using the power of story to apply its truth.	Some visuals were provided. Movement occurred, to include moving into the congregation. Duration was approximately 30 minutes.

Analysis of Long Term Memory Survey Feedback. (Copies of the initial four sermons are found at Appendices E, G, I, and K). In short, this was the most surprising and overwhelming response of the study. In response to almost every question, the narrative sermon scored significantly higher than the baseline sermon, or any of the four sermons of various styles. This was surprising in that the informal response to earlier attempts to preach narrative sermons was generally very vocal and very negative.

In addition, not only did it receive the highest scores across all four weeks, they were significantly higher. For instance, Survey Question A asked individuals to respond to: “I found today’s sermon interesting.” Fifty-five percent strongly agreed in the baseline questionnaire, but 79% strongly agreed in response to the narrative sermon, with an additional 7% still agreeing.

Likewise, Question B asked individuals to respond to: “I found today’s sermon relevant to my life.” Fifty-one percent strongly agreed in the baseline questionnaire, but again, 79% strongly agreed in response to the narrative sermon.

In response to every question, the narrative “story telling” sermon was far superior to the baseline and the other three sermons with the exception of Question K (Visuals helped me to understand the theme) and Question M (Different delivery methods help me to stay connected). With regard to Question K, statistics reveal the involvement in the story and with the story teller made visuals unnecessary and perhaps even a

distraction. With regard to Question M, the question did not really address the sermon itself, or compare to other sermons. In hindsight I would rewrite or exclude the question.

Analysis of Short Term Memory Survey Feedback. The feedback from the Short Term Memory Surveys was even more dramatic than the Long Term Memory Surveys. Again, Question A asked individuals to respond to: “I found today’s sermon interesting.” Fifty-five percent strongly agreed in the baseline questionnaire, but an overwhelming 94% strongly agreed in response to the narrative sermon, with the remaining 6% still agreeing.

Question B asked individuals to respond to: “I found today’s sermon relevant to my life.” Fifty-one percent strongly agreed in the baseline questionnaire, but again, an overwhelming 94% strongly agreed in response to the narrative sermon with the remaining 6% still agreeing. In other words, 100% of the responders found the narrative sermon interesting with the vast majority strongly agreeing with the question on the Likert scale. Even averaging the Long Term and Short Term surveys, for instance on Question A, resulted in 87% (see matrix below) strongly agreeing as compared to the 55% baseline response.

a. “I found today’s sermon interesting.”					
	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
ST Narrative Survey	0.94	0.06			
LT Narrative Survey	0.79	0.07	0.07		0.07
Total ST/LT Narrative	0.87	0.07	0.04	0.00	0.04
Baseline	0.55	0.31	0.05	0.09	

The complete question by question comparison over five weeks is found at Appendix O.

Analysis of Electronic Feedback. The electronic feedback emphasized five moments in the sermon, which coincided well with the other forms of feedback. These occurred at minutes 7, 13, 20, 24 and 27-28. All five were highly emotional moments, especially the final four:

Minute 13: “Everyone was surprised and a little amused when he returned. They were even more surprised when he pulled the gun.”

Minute 20: “Which could be translated in heart language; *‘Forgive so you might live. Because you are dying, precious one. Forgive so you might have peace. Forgive because you have been forgiven so very much.’*”

Minute 24: “*Wait,*” she whispered. “*WAIT!*” Louder this time. “*Mam,*” replied the judge, “*the proceedings have concluded.*” “*No.*” said Grandma. “*I have a right to be heard. NO! If anyone in this world has a right, I have a right to be heard!*”

Minute 27-28: “And a resurrection breath sucked in between Grandma’s lips, inhaling life deeply for the first time in a very long time. If angels rejoice, and surely they do, then there must have been quite a celebration.”

Analysis of Biometric (Video) Feedback. As stated above, and especially true in this sermon, the biometric feedback showed so little minute by minute variance as to be useless in providing valuable feedback.

Analysis of Sermon Effectiveness Graph. The Sermon Effectiveness Graph at Appendix F identified high levels of connectivity across feedback methods at five different points. These were at minute 13, 17, 20, 22 and 25. Only two of these have not already been identified above. The remaining two were:

Minute 17: A loud gunshot was played over the sound system at the culmination of a dramatic conflict. This was clearly startling to the congregation.

Minute 22: “*Forgive, to be forgiven. Forgive so you might live.*’ And hot tears rolled down both their faces.”

There were some unexpected results with regard to demographics. Although there was little difference in the level of engagement between men and women, there was an unexpected result with regard to age. I anticipated that the younger respondents (represented by electronic feedback) would be more engaged than the older respondents. During the first sermon this was not the case.

Although the points within the sermon when younger respondents were most engaged were similar to the older respondents, older participants had a higher level of overall engagement. Although statistically this is correct, I hesitate to draw too fine a conclusion to this point for three reasons.

First, it may be that using the electronic devices the first week was awkward for the participants which inhibited the number of times they responded. Secondly, the number of electronic responders was the lowest in the first week. Thirdly, in the final four weeks, the electronic feedback mirrored the other methods much more closely, to include the story telling sermons.

Week 1 Summary Analysis

It is clear, without a doubt, that the narrative sermon was by far the most effective of the first four sermons. As expected, based upon the teaching methods of Jesus, stories are extremely effective ways to communicate biblical truths. They seem to provide a memory framework and become a bridge to application in the hearer’s life. This is

exceedingly clear not only from the statistical feedback from the Likert scale questions, but also by the additional comments that were offered on the surveys.

These included such comments as,

“Great sermon! Reassured me that God is good, so forgiving, and I need to follow through with this more myself.”

“I noticed the story type sermon kept the attention of the whole congregation. So caught up in the words that I hardly noticed the visuals.”

“God forgives me for so many things every day. I must forgive others for what they have done.”

“Helped me be more compassionate toward others. I truly have unforgiveness in my life – helped me realize what Christ did for me.”

These kinds of comments were especially overwhelming in that only two verses of Bible were read at the beginning of the sermon. The narrative sermon clearly captures and maintains the attention of the audience.

It also seems that the story must have a common intersection with the life of the hearer. This may seem obvious, but I must admit in practice, it was not to me. In considering previous failed attempts at narrative sermons, I realized that although the stories were interesting and bizarre, there was little emotional intersection with the congregation to capture and maintain connectivity. In other words, a story is not a good story unless there is some overlap with the hearer’s life.

This is certainly the case with the parables of Jesus. His stories were highly relatable in that many had agrarian settings and the antagonists (Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes) were also those that harassed the hearers of the parable. Additionally, emotional overlap seems to be especially effective in maintaining connectivity with the congregation and helping them to assimilate the information into their lives.

Analysis of Sermons by Week
Week 2 (16 Sept)

Style	Defined As	Additional Factors
Expository	A systematic exposition that expounds upon the meaning of a particular text or passage of scripture.	Outlines were provided both in the bulletin and on the screen behind the pulpit. Movement was kept to a minimum. Alliteration was used. Duration was approximately 25 minutes.

Analysis of Long Term Memory Survey Feedback. As surprising as the positive results were for the narrative sermon during week one, the expository sermon was equally as surprising for the negative results that were received. The expository sermon scores were not only lower than any of the first four sermons, but also significantly lower than the baseline scores.

For example, Survey Question A asked individuals to respond to: “I found today’s sermon interesting.” Fifty-five percent strongly agreed in the baseline questionnaire, but only 38% of the long term memory respondents, strongly agreed in response to the expository sermon.

Likewise, Question D asked individuals to respond to: “I have a better understanding of God’s expectation for my life.” 49% strongly agreed in the baseline questionnaire, but 0% strongly agreed in response to the expository sermon.

I anticipated that Question K (Visuals helped me to understand the theme) might be one area where the expository sermon might be superior, but this did not prove to be accurate. I felt this to be likely due to the fact that visuals, such as outlines, bullet points on the screen behind the pulpit, and pictures, compliment the expository sermon well. Yet even in this area, the expository sermon scored lower than the other sermons or the baseline survey.

Analysis of Short Term Memory Survey Feedback. Just as in the Long Term Memory Surveys, the Short Term Memory Surveys proved to score significantly lower on the Likert Scale questions.

There seemed to be no statistical difference between the long and short term surveys. I had wondered if the long term surveys might score higher in that there were additional memory tools with visuals and outlines, but this did not prove to be the case. Amazingly, in the 16 Likert Scale questions, the expository sermon finished last in 12, and never finished above third in the remaining four questions. (See Appendix O.)

Analysis of Electronic Feedback. The electronic feedback emphasized three moments in the sermon, which coincided well with the other forms of feedback. These occurred at minute 16, 22 and 24. All three of these were complimented by visuals: either pictures or a video. All had some significant level of emotionality.

Minute 16: “Albert Einstein, one of the greatest minds of the 20th century, once said, *‘The more I study science, the more I believe in God. We see a Universe marvelously arranged and obeying certain laws, but only dimly understand these laws. Our limited minds cannot grasp the mysterious force that moves the constellations.’* We must simply come as children before such power.” (Accompanied by visual).

Minute 22: “Proverbs 18:9. I didn’t know the Scripture and so I threw it on the passenger seat and drove home. Later that night I began to wonder what the Bible verse was and so I looked it up. Proverbs 18:9 He also who is slack in his work is brother to him who destroys. I swear – completely true story. And I got the message, *right between the eyes!*” (Accompanied by visual).

Minute 24: “But that’s only one of two important questions. The second is this; *how will you respond to such a God?* Before we get to the fourth and last section, I’d like to show you just a brief video clip. It’s simply about a man, lost at sea. (VIDEO CLIP: Joe and the Volcano; “Thank You for my life.”)”

Analysis of Biometric (Video) Feedback. As stated above, there was little minute-by-minute variance observable. There was a slight increase at minute 24, discussed above.

Analysis of Sermon Effectiveness Graph. One observable positive of the expository sermon is the constant level of interest throughout the entire message. As seen at Appendix H, the level of interest began early, as opposed to any of the other sermons. This is especially true with any type of story sermon in which there is a significant investment of time in order to set the stage.

In an expository sermon the need to set the stage is limited and the major points of the sermon can begin earlier, which is observable in the Analysis of Sermon Effectiveness Graph. Unfortunately, the level of overall interest and memory retention does not offset this one advantage.

There were four points in the sermon where there was a significant level of connectivity, based upon the specific comments of the respondents:

Minute 5: “Yet don’t we have this in common? Haven’t there been times in your life when God has surprisingly, unexpectedly, revealed Himself to you in such a new and powerful way that you are just stopped in your tracks.”

Minute 7: “Because that is exactly what this Psalm is about. This Psalm could be broken down in to four parts. (SLIDE #1) God revealing Himself through the majesty

of the night skies. God revealing His power through the movement of the sun. God revealing Himself through the Law and the Scriptures. And finally, the only possible response to a God that is so amazing.”

Minute 12: “We aren’t very good at being quiet are we? We fill every moment of every day with words, music...noise of all kinds. Perhaps because if we did stop and listen, what choice would we have but to step off the throne of our own lives, and bow before Him as He takes His rightful place.”

Minute 24: (VIDEO CLIP: Joe and the Volcano; “Thank You for my life.”)

With regard to demographics, there was little difference between men and women, or younger and older respondents. The younger respondents were engaged roughly at the same points within the sermon, and with one slight exception, at the same level of engagement. Women, in both age groups, were slightly more positive about the sermon, although that was the case across most of the sermons.

Week 2 Summary Analysis

The expository sermon compared so poorly to the other sermons that I feel it necessary to say that all of the sermons over the five week period were given my very best effort. Additionally, my normal preaching does include an occasional expository sermon, so it was not unusual for the congregation to hear this type of message. Prior to my arrival, the expository sermon was the predominant style that was presented to the congregation.

The written comments for this sermon were also fewer and certainly less positive. These included: “Like the visuals used in the sermon. “I liked the photos during the sermon. A sermon outline on the screen was helpful.” With regard to these written

comments, it almost seems as though the respondents were looking for some type of positive comment to make, which were in sharp contrast to the Likert scale question responses.

Question P asked participants to respond to, “I am at a point in my life when I am experiencing significant heartache and tribulation.” Zero percent of respondents “agreed strongly” with this statement, the lowest recorded during the five week study. Therefore, I can assume that the low response is not due to the frame of mind of the respondents as they entered the worship experience.

I truly found the poor results of the expository sermon to be surprising. This is especially true in that I believe, if asked, the majority of the congregation would state the expository is the favored form of sermon. But from this analysis the expository sermon finished last in almost every category. In other words, what they might state and believe as being the best or most effective sermon type, statistically is the least effective and least preferred. For me, this seems to be a rather profound finding.

Why is it that some church members say they prefer expository preaching and yet as seen on the percentage comparison chart, (Appendix P) the expository sermon was only half as effective as any other sermon? Perhaps Charles Duhigg in his book, *The Power of Habit*, has some insight into the question.

Duhigg states that scientists have measured brain activity while patients were participating in complex tasks. When the tasks were complex, the frontal lobes, the outer parts of the brain, explode with activity. But when a patient did a complex task over and over again, the outer parts of the brain weren’t needed any more. Instead, the inner part, called the basal ganglia, became very active.

In other words, the outer parts of the brain take a complex task like backing a car up, going to school, or participating in a worship service and combine those tasks into one routine. Scientists call this “chunking” which frees the frontal lobes for more complex tasks.⁷⁵

Once a series of activities have been chunked together, changing that routine (habit) becomes very difficult. Any change to that routine seems wrong as the brain seeks to save energy and save the higher functions of the brain for more complex tasks.

Duhigg illustrates this by studies that were done in 2003 by the music industry. The studies identified that there were some songs on the radio that listeners stated they did not like, but then would not change the radio station to avoid. They identified that some songs seemed “sticky” while others were not. Duhigg explains that if the brain anticipates a love song, and hears a love song (previously determined by a routine or habit) the listener will stick with the song, even if they say they do not like the song.⁷⁶

Conversely, could it be that the congregation has experienced so many expository sermons, as this has been the common style for decades, that they have “chunked” a series of complex worship activities together to the point that any other style seems wrong? Therefore they might say, as many churches do today, that expository preaching is the preferred style, while through individual questions, it is clear they have a higher connectivity through other styles.

In hindsight, I very much wish I would have asked in the baseline questionnaire what their preferred style of preaching was, in order to provide some statistical insight into this question. Even so, this would certainly contribute to explaining the resistance to

⁷⁵ Charles Duhigg, *The Power of Habit; Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*, (New York: Random House, 2012.)

⁷⁶ Ibid, 511.

any change in the church, as well as highlight effective ways make incremental changes. This will be discussed further in the final chapter of this study.

Additionally, there was little or no call to action in this sermon. In other sermons, where the response was much more positive, there were clear expectations, actions, or challenges that were offered. This sermon encouraged the congregation to stop and consider the greatness of our God and respond in an appropriate manner. But to be a more effective sermon, I could have included a more overt and concrete challenge.

From a biblical perspective, I should not have been surprised that the expository sermon was the least effective in that there are so few examples of such sermons in the scriptures. Perhaps one of the best examples is found in the Book of Acts. Acts 28:23 says,

“When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.”

Here seems to be one of the few examples that might be identified as an expository sermon. But this is one of a very few examples as opposed to the approximately one third of all of Jesus’ teachings that were in the form of stories and parables. Expository sermons are scripturally rare events, and based upon the results of this study, should likely be equally rare in this congregation.

Analysis of Sermons by Week
Week 3 (23 Sept)

Style	Defined As	Additional Factors
Biographical	Preaching that focuses on a particular Bible character. The preacher explains the successes and failures of that biblical character and what we can learn from his or her life.	Outlines were provided both in the bulletin and on the screen behind the pulpit. Humor was incorporated. Duration was approximately 25 minutes.

Analysis of Long Term Memory Survey Feedback. With the first two sermons I had some expectation of how effective they might be which was realized, even to a greater degree than anticipated. On the other hand I had no expectation of how a biographical sermon might be received in that it is not a sermon style I have often used. I was very pleased to discover that the biographical sermon was second only to the narrative sermon, and a close second at that.

For example, Survey Question A asked individuals to respond to: “I found today’s sermon interesting.” Fifty-five percent strongly agreed in the baseline questionnaire, but 73% of the long term memory respondents, strongly agreed in response to the biographical sermon.

Likewise, Question B asked individuals to respond to: “I found today’s sermon relevant to my life.” Fifty-one percent strongly agreed in the baseline questionnaire, but 73% strongly agreed in response to the biographical sermon. Across all questions the responses were both surprisingly high and similar to the narrative sermon.

Analysis of Short Term Memory Survey Feedback. Also similar to the narrative sermon, the feedback from the biographical Short Term Memory Surveys was even more dramatic than the Long Term Memory Surveys. Again, Question A asked

individuals to respond to: “I found today’s sermon interesting.” Fifty-five percent strongly agreed in the baseline questionnaire, but an overwhelming 80% strongly agreed in response to the narrative sermon, with another 13% agreeing.

Question B asked individuals to respond to: “I found today’s sermon relevant to my life.” Fifty-one percent strongly agreed in the baseline questionnaire, but again, an overwhelming 87% strongly agreed in response to the narrative sermon with 9% still agreeing. In other words, 89% of the responders found the narrative sermon interesting with the vast majority strongly agreeing with the question on the Likert scale. Even averaging the Long Term and Short Term surveys, for instance on Question A, resulted in 80% strongly agreeing as compared to the 51% baseline response.

Analysis of Electronic Feedback. The electronic feedback identified five spikes in connectivity. Minute five and twenty-three were both moments where the hearer was challenged to persevere or be great in the kingdom. Minutes nine and fifteen identified something that was supernatural and bizarre. Minute seventeen highlighted an experience that is likely common to all of us.

Minute 5: “For every great victory, there was a coach, a trainer, or a drill sergeant that pushed each one beyond the place they believed they could go. And it is likely that over those thousands of hours of preparation there were hundreds of times that every future champion thought about quitting. Getting up, wiping the sweat from their brow, and turning their back on their destiny.”

Minute 9: “But BEFORE all of the *conviction, confidence, and courage* of Elijah, the Lord tells Elijah, 3 Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by

the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there. How strange!”

Minute 15: “But do you know what I have learned about God’s provision? It will rarely be what we expect, it won’t be what we want, it will often be bizarre, and it will be exactly what we need. *Ravens! Are you kidding me!*”

Minute 17: “Learn to trust God one day at a time. Did you know that we can actually only live in the present tense? *Well Cal, that’s a silly question. Of course we know you can only live in the present moment!* I don’t think we do and we sure don’t act like it. Our minds tend to drift to the past, present and future, all at the same time.”

Minute 23: “But let me ask you this. Do you have a desire to be great in the Kingdom of God? Because all of those others fields of endeavor are good, but none are eternal. None are what you are created for.”

Analysis of Biometric (Video) Feedback. This feedback provided no change from previous observations and was of little assistance.

Analysis of Sermon Effectiveness Graph. This sermon analysis graph showed similar characteristics with the narrative sermon. Like the narrative sermon, there is an initial investment to set the stage which is more than made up for in the overall level of interest and connectivity. The intersections of high levels of connectivity, across methods of feedback, occurred at minutes nine, fifteen, seventeen, and twenty-three, all which have been discussed above.

With regard to demographics, the number of younger respondents (as reflected by electronic feedback) was the highest in this sermon out of the first four sermons. This

included both more overall responses as well as a higher level of connectivity. The younger responders seemed to be engaged earlier in the sermon as well.

As I reviewed the sermon, in order to determine what was going on in the first few moments of the sermon, I realized there were several visuals that were used in those first few moments. In no other sermon did this occur. These visuals represented great people/events in history when there had been a heroic victory. The senior adults seemed to have little connectivity with these, while the younger adults had a very high degree of connectivity.

It would seem that the younger audience has a greater degree of comfort and connection with visuals than the older generation. The old adage “know your audience” seems especially appropriate. Although there was no reference to these visuals in the short or long term surveys, they did seem to be very effective gathering tools, especially for younger adults. Additionally, each of these visuals implied a challenge for the congregation. As will be discussed in the summary, this congregation’s responds very positively to a challenge.

As with previous sermons, women, in both age groups, were slightly more positive about the sermon. This was the case in all five of the sermons.

Week 3 Summary Analysis

The high level of connectivity with the biographical sermon was very much a surprise, finishing second only to the narrative sermon. Perhaps the reason for the high evaluation of the sermon is that like the narrative sermon, the biographical sermon is also a story that gives the hearer tools to engage and remember significant points. The

biographical sermon is a story with beginning, middle and end, and like the narrative sermon provides a commonality that the hearer can relate to.

The biographical sermon challenges the hearer as well. The sermon premise was that Elijah was great in the kingdom of God; therefore if we follow his example, we too can be great in the kingdom of God. Minute 23, which overtly made this challenge, was a moment of high connectivity during the sermon.

This is also supported by Question S which asked, “I found this sermon interesting because it called me to action.” The baseline response was 42% while the average of long and short term surveys for this sermon was 53%. This was also the highest percentage for Question S of any of the first four sermons.

Likewise, we see many examples in the New Testament of heroic figures of the Old Testament, held up as inspirational models for our emulation. For example the great “Hall of Faith” of Hebrews 11 concludes in Chapter 12 with, “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” The author seems to know that people of faith need, and respond to, the challenge of exemplary heroes. Likewise, I understand that this congregation responds similarly.

Analysis of Sermons by Week Week 4 (30 Sept)

Style	Defined As	Additional Factors
Topical	Using several Scriptures throughout the Bible to address an issue or discuss a topic.	Drama and music was incorporated into the sermon. The congregation was encouraged to participate. Video was incorporated. Duration was approximately 30 minutes to include the Lord’s Supper.

Analysis of Long Term Memory Survey Feedback. The topic of this sermon was unity within the body of Christ. The sermon culminated in the sharing of the Lord's Supper. Of the first four sermons, this one required the greatest amount of preparation and coordination across the entire staff. Music was emphasized and the order of service was altered from the norm in an effort to emphasize the theme and encourage a true sense of worship as the Lord's Supper was shared. Even with a great amount of effort, this sermon finished third out of the first four sermons presented.

Statistically there were several unexpected and strange responses. In response to five of the sixteen questions, the Long Term Memory Surveys were significantly above the Baseline Surveys. These included Questions B, C, F, G, and I. But compared to the narrative or biographical sermon, the topical sermon did not fair well, most often finishing in third place.

Additionally, some of the questions I expected this sermon to do well in, finished in last place. For instance Question E asked: "This sermon will contribute to me being more like Jesus." Forty-nine percent of the baseline respondents strongly agreed with this statement while only 20% strongly agreed with regard to the topical sermon. Likewise, Question Q asked, "I connected to this sermon because it touched my heart." Thirty-four percent of the baseline respondents strongly agreed with this statement while only 20% strongly agreed with regard to the topical sermon.

These results are very surprising in that I anticipated the physical exercise of participating in the Lord's Supper would provide connectivity with the subject matter, as well as remind us in physical ways of the passion and sacrifice of Jesus. Not only did this not seem to occur, the results are far below the baseline survey results.

Analysis of Short Term Memory Survey Feedback. The Short Term Memory Surveys mirrored very closely the results of the Long Term Surveys with the exception of Questions E and H. Question H only raised the percentage to roughly equivalent of the baseline. Again, Question E asked: “This sermon will contribute to me being more like Jesus.” Forty-nine percent of the baseline respondents strongly agreed with this statement while 60% strongly agreed to the Topical Sermon. This equates to a significant 40% difference between the Short Term and Long Term Surveys.

It would seem from this response that during and immediately after the Lord’s Supper, there is a high level of connectivity, which seems to become less significant after a few days. This may be from our high degree of comfort level with the Lord’s Supper as all of the survey respondents have been Christians for over 20 years and have participated hundreds of times over their lives. This is reflected in question five of the Long Term Survey and question six of the Short Term survey that identifies 100% of respondents have been Christians for over 20 years.

Analysis of Electronic Feedback. There were five spikes in connectivity during the sermon. Many of these spikes occurred at highly emotional moments or when the congregation was challenged to act with unity. These occurred at:

Minute 8: “The world says that science is the ultimate truth. It says that we are made of material stuff and we work in mechanistic ways. The world says if you can’t see it – it’s not real.”

Minute 13: (After watching a video of a soldier returning home from war.)
 “Something happened in your throat...you got “choked up”. Your chest began to swell just a little...right around your “heart”. Tears might have begun to swell up...in just 60

seconds all of those things happened! How do I know that? Why is that a common experience? Because OUR heavenly Father created all of us that way.”

Minute 19: “Scientists tell us that the human heart creates an electromagnetic field and when I am depressed, my “field” can affect your “field.” You may have experienced that with some people that are just real bummers! *They are messing with your field!* And scientists really don’t understand it. THEY can’t understand it!”

Minute 23: “Because when we do, we will find blessing and community and wholeness with each other, and unity and peace with God.”

Minute 27: Participation in the Lord’s Supper.

Analysis of Biometric (Video) Feedback. This feedback provided no change from previous observations and was of little assistance.

Analysis of Sermon Effectiveness Graph. Like the expository sermon, the topical sermon had a significant amount of connectivity from the beginning of the message, which was sustained throughout. The topical sermon required no stage to be set, but began immediately.

The short term responses were some of the highest of any of the four sermons. This identifies an immediate high degree of connectivity which seems to degrade quickly. Again, this may be because of the high degree of comfort with the Lord’s Supper.

With regard to demographics, there was little difference between men and women, or younger and older respondents. In fact, the younger respondents mirrored the responses of the older participants closer in this sermon than any other from beginning to end. Women, in both age groups, were slightly more positive about the sermon.

Week 4 Summary Analysis

The results of the feedback were surprising and frustrating. A great amount of work and preparation went into this service, yet the feedback was only at the acceptable level. This sermon was received in large part better than the baseline survey, but compared to the other three test sermons, finished only third.

Question P asked participants to respond to, “I am at a point in my life when I am experiencing significant heartache and tribulation.” Twenty-seven percent of respondents “agreed strongly” with this statement, the highest recorded during the five week study, which may represent some off the lack of connectivity with the sermon.

The challenge seems to be in presenting the Lord’s Supper in a way that breaks through the comfort level and encourages people to look afresh at the depth of meaning of the Sacrament. Additionally, in hindsight, this sermon in many ways was more of an expository sermon, which I have discovered is the least effective way to communicate biblical truths to this audience.

As stated previously, there was an immediate high degree of connectivity which seems to degrade quickly. On one hand I was disappointed by the results of this sermon. On the other, I remember that we are to repeatedly come again to the Lord’s Table, perhaps for this very reason.

Initially it seems we have a high level of emotional connectivity while sharing the Eucharist, which dissipates rapidly over time. In other words, we are a forgetful people, and coming time and again helps us to reconnect and remember the sacrifice of Christ with all of its profound facets of meaning.

Determining the Elements to be Applied to the Fifth Message

First, it was overwhelmingly clear that the narrative and biographical sermons were the most effective and sustained the highest level of connectivity. In fact, the narrative sermon was almost twice as effective as the expository sermon. Therefore, I chose the fifth sermon to be a hybrid between a narrative and expository sermon.

Secondly, I realized that a narrative sermon must have a high degree of connectivity. A story, even interesting or bizarre, is not enough. The story must have a high degree of connectivity with the life of the hearer, especially emotional commonality.

Thirdly, in a narrative sermon, the stage should be set as quickly as possible. Both the previous biographical and narrative sermons identified an initial low level of connectivity that should be avoided. In relation to this, from the feedback received, I realized that I must be exceedingly familiar with the story so the congregation does not feel as if I am reading to them.

Fourth, visuals added a high degree of connectivity across most of the four messages, especially in the initial few minutes, and would be applied in the fifth in this way. Visuals of all types, to include outlines, pictures, and videos all added to the effectiveness of the sermon, with the exception of the narrative sermon.

Next, as effective as visuals were, conversely the use of humor was not, (see “Question T” in both Long Term and Short Term Survey results.) I found this surprising as both the question about humor, and additional responses, all led me to the conclusion that humor has limited effectiveness. At best, humor seems to be an aid to gather and quickly re-gather the congregation. But, humor seems to be of little value in connecting people to the message and helping them to remember significant points of the message.

Additionally, the comments of the congregation led me to believe that they did not want me to “hold back.” They encouraged, for the most part, to “let go”, and be passionate if I felt led in that direction. This was very freeing and something I hoped to include in the final sermon.

Finally, across all sermons, moments where the congregation was challenged to action had high levels of connectivity. My goal was to emphasize a challenge to the congregation.

Analysis of the Fifth Sermon (7 October)

Style	Defined As	Additional Factors
Narrative (story telling)/ Biographical Hybrid	A combination of narrative exposition and biographical study emphasizing the character and what we can learn from his or her life.	The narrative portion of the sermon emphasized connectivity with the life setting of the congregation. “Setting the stage” was minimized. Visuals were included and a call to action concluded the sermon. Duration was approximately 30 minutes.

Analysis of Long Term Memory Survey Feedback. After considering the strengths and weaknesses of the previous four sermons, and applying the strategy identified above for the fifth sermon, I was overwhelmed by the response. Twelve of the 16 survey questions, with regard to the hybrid sermon, finished in first place comparing all five sermons. Fifteen of 16 questions were superior to the baseline response.

For instance, Question A asked: “I found today’s sermon interesting.” Eighty-three percent strongly agreed, with the remaining 17% agreeing as well. Likewise Question B asked, “I found today’s sermon relevant to my life.” Ninety-two percent of all respondents strongly agreed with the remaining 8% agreeing. This compared to a baseline response of 51%.

The only question that was significantly lower than the baseline was Question K, “Visuals helped me to understand the theme.” This sermon scored 20% lower than the baseline. This is somewhat similar to previous results for the narrative and biographical sermons. In hindsight I should have believed the initial feedback from the other two similar sermons and not tried to force visuals into the sermon presentation.

It seems clear to me that if a story is being presented well, hearers are so focused on the story teller, that any other visuals are only an annoying distraction. With most of the other styles of sermons, visuals were maximized and complimentary. This simply does not seem to be the case with story telling sermons. In a narrative sermon, the story teller is the visual.

Analysis of Short Term Memory Survey Feedback. Although the Long Term Survey responses were good, the Short Term Memory Surveys were even better. Again, Question A asked: “I found today’s sermon interesting.” One-hundred percent strongly agreed. Likewise Question B asked, “I found today’s sermon relevant to my life.” Ninety-four percent of all respondents strongly agreed with the remaining 6% agreeing. This compared favorably to the baseline response of 51%. Question C asked, “The sermon helped me to worship God.” Ninety-three percent of all respondents strongly agreed with the remaining 7% agreeing. This compared favorably to the baseline response of 49%. Only Question K (visuals) was lower than the baseline.

Analysis of Electronic Feedback. There were six spikes in connectivity during the sermon. Many of these spikes occurred at highly emotional moments that also challenged the congregation to action. This sermon also received the highest level of electronic feedback of any of the five sermons. The three greatest spikes occurred at:

Minutes 17-18: “So we can pray, and should pray, with confidence; *Oh Lord, whatever it takes, make me a man of integrity for your glory.* Because I know God won’t give me more than I can endure.”

Minute 25: “Church, we are created to praise Him, in the good times and the bad – *and we aren’t doing our job.* I want to tell you the Holy Spirit woke me up Thursday morning at 5:00AM and spoke a truth into my heart that caused be to repent, and celebrate and worship for most of the morning.”

Minute 30: “Why? Because the One with the eyes of fire deserves more. He deserves more in any situation I might find myself. Our gracious and loving God is sovereign over all things to include you and me. Which means to me, we do not worship God in order to receive – we worship because He is worthy, whether we are in the middle of a storm or the middle of a rainbow.”

Analysis of Biometric (Video) Feedback. This feedback provided little change from previous observations. The feedback did produce slightly higher scores than the other four sermons.

Analysis of Sermon Effectiveness Graph. Two important observations are gained by this graph. First, although my intention was to write a story that connected with the congregation, it appears that it did not. The first half of the sermon emphasized a story, while the second was biographical.

The first half of the sermon had lower connectivity then hoped for. The story was theologically correct and set in a contemporary setting, but it did not really intersect with the lives of the people. It appears they could not see themselves in the story and had little connectivity to it. It seems as if the entire first half of the sermon only set the stage for

the second half, which had an incredibly high level of connectivity. A long period of setting the stage was something I had intended to avoid and yet failed to do.

Secondly, the written responses to the Short Term Surveys and the Simultaneous Electronic Feedback were much higher than the responses to the Long Term Surveys. In this sermon I allowed myself to be freer and more emotional than in previous sermons. The congregation immediately seemed to respond to this, but the long term value seemed to be minimal. While the overall response was extremely positive, this is something to consider in future sermons.

Week 5 Summary Analysis

As expected, the narrative/biographical sermon validated earlier sermon findings with a high degree of connectivity. In the first four weeks, these two sermons scored almost twice as well as the others. The fifth hybrid sermon scored significantly higher than any of the first four.

Although every story requires some “stage setting,” I unintentionally spent too much time in this phase of the message. This was especially apparent in the Long Term Memory Surveys. Additionally, the story did not have a high enough intersection with the lives of the congregation. I did not recognize this until after the presentation, even though I had specifically noted it in an earlier finding.

Emotion seems to have a short term value, but limited long term benefit. This validates something I have always believed; natural passion about a topic should be permitted but forced emotion is of limited or no long term value.

Visuals (outlines, videos, drama) work well with some styles of sermons such as expository, but not well with story telling. I failed to realize this, thinking that if a visual is good for one, it could be even better for another. This was simply not the case.

With regard to demographics, the number of younger respondents (as reflected by electronic feedback) was slightly higher in this sermon than the majority of the other four sermons. The younger respondents engaged earlier and maintained a high level of connectivity throughout the sermon. As in a previous sermon, the reason for this may be to the early use of visuals which a younger generation seems to be much more connected to.

Finally, the church desires to be challenged. This was very apparent not only by the Likert Scale questions, but also the written and verbal comments after sermons. We desire to be challenged and do what is difficult if it is for a good cause. Throughout all sermons, challenging the church to specific action always received high connectivity feedback.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The conclusion section of this study provides a summary of the project and process by chapter. It also includes additional comments about some of the more important findings, some additional issues, and tries to understand why some of the results were so clearly superior. I also include comments with regard to what I might do differently if this project was repeated in the future. Finally, I discuss what I learned about myself during this study.

In the previous four chapters I sought to identify a method to maximize the sermonic moment and help the congregation to internalize God's desires and expectations for His people. Through the sermon, my desire was to contribute in a more meaningful way to the transformation of His children into Christ-likeness.

This was accomplished by obtaining feedback from the congregation to determine when in the sermon there was a high degree of connectivity and engagement. Over four sermons, moments of high and low engagement were identified. The goal of the final sermon was to make adjustments based on the analysis of the first four weeks in order to maximize the sermonic moment.

Summary Findings of Chapter One: Introduction

In Chapter One, I attempted to lay the ground work by identifying the ministry question which was, "How can I prepare and present the most effective weekly sermon that will be fresh, clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing?" Additionally, I identified the desired outcome which was to be a more effective messenger of God's word by minimizing inhibitors and maximizing actions and activities that facilitate

effective communications. I also described the church setting to include the mission and vision of the church.

Summary Findings of Chapter Two: Project Description

In Chapter Two, I sought to describe the project. This included the methods of obtaining feedback from the congregation as well as the sermon emphasis by week.

In great part, the methods of obtaining feedback were effective and provided great insight. If this study was repeated, I would alter some of the survey questions as well as add one additional question. Most of all I would change the method of gathering biometric data. Biometric data was by far the greatest disappointment in this study. Specifics on these adjustments are made below.

Summary Findings of Chapter Three: Biblical and Theological Reflection

In Chapter Three, I identified the theological rationale of this project to include an exploration of preaching in the Old Testament and the New Testament. I also explored some of the great preachers of church history as well as contemporary preaching.

This section was personally as beneficial as any other part of the study. Not only was it inspiring, but across this great expanse of preachers, I was able to identify common characteristics that I could incorporate and anticipate high levels of engagement. In retrospect, I was able to identify why something was effective in a sermon I had preached, because I was aware of these common characteristics.

Summary Findings of Chapter Four: Critical Analysis

In Chapter Four, I provided critical analysis of this study to include a description of modifications from the initial plan, observations with regard to the four methods of feedback, and an explanation of the sermon effectiveness graphs to include comments on

demographics. Additionally, a week by week analysis of each of the first four sermons was provided.

The analysis of the first four sermons, as well as the fifth, provided an incredibly rich resource contributing to the objective of this study. Perhaps foremost among the findings is that narrative preaching provides a memory framework which is most likely to facilitate change and growth. The analysis identified the great challenges of preaching a good narrative sermon.

The analysis also provided excellent insights with regard to the use of visuals, the use of emotion, and the need for a call to action for this congregation. These will be commented on in greater detail.

Finally, the analysis of the fifth sermon revealed that by studying the congregation, as well as great preachers throughout history, it is possible to minimize inhibitors and maximize actions and activities that facilitate effective sermonic communications.

Potential Changes to Future Studies

As identified above, measuring biometric response was the greatest disappointment of this study. In great part, measuring the biometric response of the congregation was where this study was conceived, and yet it proved to be the most difficult and provided the least insight.

If I was to repeat this study, I would not have attempted to record the entire congregation, but a small subgroup with one camera dedicated to only one or two people. Additionally, a pre-test of this subgroup may have been possible to determine their body language and their sermon interaction. As part of the pre-test, it would be beneficial to

allow the participants to observe the recording and comment on when they felt a high or low degree of engagement. Even so, this would be a very complex and time intensive endeavor.

With regard to the survey questions, there were four that I determined were not effective, primarily because the issue was not common throughout all sermons. If I was to repeat this study I would likely rewrite or omit these questions:

“j. I found the integration of music with the theme of the sermon helpful”

“l. I felt connected to the congregation and the preacher...”

“m. Different delivery methods help me to stay connected”

“t. I found this sermon interesting because it made me laugh”

I would also add one question to the baseline survey which would determine the respondents preferred style of preaching. I believe this would provide interesting insights into what they perceive generally as the most effective sermon style, as compared to their statistical response in later surveys.

Finally, as strange as it may seem, if I were to repeat this study in the future, I would trust the initial analysis and apply it more specifically in the final sermon. Perhaps because of my preconceptions about preaching and the congregation I was hesitant to fully apply the initial findings, either consciously or unconsciously. After the final sermon was presented, there were shortcomings identified that if I had trusted the initial findings, could have been avoided.

Concluding Comments

One of the first issues I struggled with as I examined the testimony of the scripture with regard to preaching is what I sensed to be a tension between being solely led by the Spirit, as opposed to being a student of preaching and being well prepared. My conclusion prior to the project was that relying on the Holy Spirit is an essential

‘given’. Without this, we are not an “authentic and dedicated believer” able to “translate the living Word.”⁷⁷

Although it may not be the most important academic question, it was an issue that continued to trouble me throughout the project. This was likely true because the project did not emphasize the leading of the Holy Spirit, but rather feedback from the congregation. Although I stated that reliance on the Spirit was a given, and prayed before, during and after writing each message, it seemed more than ever I was constantly reminded of the centrality of Spirit-driven preaching.

The Sunday before the first week of the project, I felt strongly led by the Spirit to preach a sermon based on Joshua 24:15; “but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” It was a far shorter sermon than I usually preach, without handouts, visuals, drama, and without excessive emotion. It was simple and simply delivered. It was, most importantly, the message that I believe the Spirit had given me. The response to the quiet, brief sermon was overwhelming as many came to the “altar.”

A second moment also affirmed to me the importance of relying on the Spirit. The Thursday morning before the fifth and final sermon, the culmination of months of study, the Spirit woke me from sleep with a very specific message for the congregation. Let me make it clear, this is a very rare event and has only happened two or three times in my life. It was not a message that I anticipated, nor did it go along with the plan I had made for the culminating sermon.

⁷⁷ David A. Enyart, *Creative Anticipation: Narrative Sermon Designs for Telling the Story*, (Xlibris Press, 2002), 44.

I believe two things were going on in that moment. First, there was a message that the Spirit wanted me to speak to this congregation. But secondly, and probably more applicable to this study, I believe the Spirit was asking me a question: *will you rely on your training, education, and study, or will you rely first and foremost on Me.* At the beginning and at the end of this study, the Spirit emphasized that preaching without relying on Him is empty, futile and foolish. Again, this may not be the most academic comment, but I believe it must be the first and most essential one.

That said I believe the overarching result of the project was very successful in answering the core ministry question. The ministry question asked, “How can I prepare and present the most effective weekly sermon that will be fresh, clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing?” In other words, is it possible through observation, study, and feedback to improve the quality and connectivity of the sermon? Without a doubt the results identify a clear improvement from baseline responses, as well as the fifth sermon over the previous four. In fact the results were very positive and startlingly clear.

First, I was overwhelmed at the positive results of the storytelling sermons. The results were so significant that I have come to the conclusion that in preparation for every sermon, a story should at least be considered for inclusion. Some biblical passages are clearly easier to develop into stories than others. Yet the example of Jesus telling parables, the testimony of historical and contemporary preachers, and even including the results of this study, all draw me to conclude that storytelling is an essential tool in communicating biblical truths.

Along with this, I have been reminded that writing a parable or a good story is an art. I find it hard to believe that I specifically came to some clear conclusions about what

makes a good story after the fourth sermon, but missed the mark in the fifth sermon. I knew the story, like Jesus' parables, had to intersect with an important facet of their lives. And yet looking back, I failed to do so, which is seen in the sermon graph. My sense is that this is likely why there are so many expository sermons which do not require as much creativity or time.

What makes a sermon "stick" with us? David A. Enyart states, "Preaching is communication wherein an authentic and dedicated believer translates the living Word into language that is fresh, clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing."⁷⁸ As previously stated, in order to be life changing, the sermon must be heard, *remembered*, and applied. Yet the frustrating reality is that many preachers have discovered that most sermons do not seem particularly memorable.

We know from the words of Jesus that we are body, mind, and spirit and so it would seem important to have some understanding of the way the physical body collects and assimilates new information. Perhaps the most recognizable and most preached sermon, the expository sermon, is asking the body, the brain specifically to do something it is not particularly good at. That is, memorizing specific points outside of any specific or memorable framework.

In Joshua Foer's book on how memory works he says,

"The brain is a costly organ. Though it accounts for only two percent of the body's mass, it uses up to a fifth of all the oxygen we breathe and it's where a quarter of all our glucose gets burned."⁷⁹

⁷⁸ David A. Enyart, *Creative Anticipation: Narrative Sermon Designs for Telling the Story*, (Xlibris Press, 2002), 44.

⁷⁹ Joshua Foer, *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything*, (Penguin Press, 2011), 211.

Foer's point is that the brain, as the most energy expensive piece of equipment in our body, is honed to be efficient at specific tasks, and ignore others.

Foer states, "To work efficiently (the brain) has to find order in the chaos of possible memories."⁸⁰ In order to do this, the brain requires a framework, such as a story, the more emotional, relatable, or even bizarre, the better.

For instance, which is easier to remember? First, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead." Or second, "1, 3, 3, 5, 4, 4, 9, 2, 7, (the number of letters in the first nine words of the Parable of Jesus found at Luke 10:30). Which of the two would be easier to remember? Which memory would last longer? Which would be more clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing?

Certainly the point is taken to an extreme degree. Yet to a lesser degree, the expository sermon, according to Foer, is asking the brain to do something it does not do well. The brain, to conserve energy, is looking for meaning, not for points. If there is no meaning, the brain quickly discards the information as unnecessarily costly, while meaning is remembered.

Pastors seem to know this intuitively because we offer mnemonic devices to help overcome the memory challenge. For instance, consider the expository sermon outline of Pastor Vincent Sawyer on Romans 12:1-2.⁸¹

1. What Does Full Surrender mean?
2. FULL SURRENDER IS: LETTING GOD HAVE YOUR LIFE (A Sacrificed Life)
 - a. WHAT KIND OF SACRIFICE DOES GOD WANT?
 - i. A living sacrifice
 - ii. A holy sacrifice

⁸⁰ Ibid, 212.

⁸¹ *Homiletics (The Art of Preaching and Teaching)*,
<http://www.studygodsword.com/institute/courses/homiletics/08.html> (accessed November 12, 2012).

- iii. A acceptable sacrifice
 - b. B. WHY SHOULD YOU GIVE SUCH A SACRIFICE? -- It is "your reasonable service" (Sacrifice is the logical, intelligent choice)
- 3. FULL SURRENDER IS: LETTING GOD CHANGE YOUR LIFE (A Transformed Life)
 - a. THE ENEMY OF A TRANSFORMED LIFE: The World's Mold
 - b. THE ENTRANCE INTO A TRANSFORMED LIFE: A renewed mind
 - c. THE END RESULT OF A TRANSFORMED LIFE: God's Will

Sawyer seems to realize that his congregation will need tools to help them remember the key points. Therefore, he provides a mnemonic device; three points all beginning with the letter "E". But according to Foer, that likely will not be sufficient in that without a story there is a lack of framework to facilitate memory. Foer states, "The brain best remembers things that are repeated, rhythmic, rhyming, structured (stories), and above all easily visualized."⁸² Mnemonic devices are helpful, but ultimately fall short of what is necessary for memory. I believe in great part this explains the findings in this project.

I have found it interesting, over the years when interviewing for a church position, that I am often asked, "What style of preaching do you favor?" Through experience I have learned the preferred answer is "expository" and the less preferred is "story telling". The attitude seems to be that story telling is frivolous and childlike while expository preaching is academic, meaty, and holy.

Yet what this study has demonstrated is that what works for children, also works for adults. Regardless of age, story telling provides a meaningful and memorable framework, when there is a life intersection with the hearer, which facilitates life change.

The issue of emotion in preaching also identified some surprising results. While in the Master of Divinity program, my preaching professor stated, "If you have not

⁸² Joshua Foer, *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything*, (Penguin Press, 2011), 198.

touched the heart of the people in your sermon, you have not preached.” Initially I disagreed with him in that personally, I have experienced the Spirit, resulting in life change, in an academic environment.

But over several years of preaching I began to sense a higher degree of connectivity with the congregation when heart felt stories were included, or the presentation was offered in a more passionate manner. The connectivity during the sermon seemed high, as well as the positive feedback at the front door of the church, as parishioners departed: “You really preached today, pastor!”

Likewise, humor used during the sermon seemed to facilitate connectivity. As previously stated, it is very difficult to determine congregational engagement biometrically. But through the use of humor, there is some validation that some connectivity exists.

In all three of these emotional examples, (heart felt stories, passionate presentation, and the use of humor) the immediate feedback seemed high. But this study revealed that although the immediate effect is positive, the long term benefit is minimal or even negative. The long term surveys revealed that emotional moments were not remembered and therefore had no long term value or potential of life change. Emotional moments do have the value of gathering and re-gathering the congregation during the sermon. But for this congregation, the long term value seemed to be minimal.

Another valuable finding of this study was that a call to action is necessary for the sermon to be considered effective by this congregation. It was not enough for me to imply a call to action, or assume one was obvious through the study of the scripture. Through the written comments of the survey respondents, as well as the Likert Scale

responses, it is clear that this congregation desires and responds well to specific challenges and applications in their lives.

An unexpected lesson learned might be based on the old adage, “You can not please everyone!” Although most of the congregational feedback was generally consistent, there was some feedback that was so contradictory that it made me laugh and shake my head. “You need to show more passion!” “I felt like you were yelling at us!” “I like your Army stories.” “You tell too many Army stories.” Although these were minority comments, they still caused me to stop and consider; how much of preaching is about making the congregation happy?

When considering the prophets, Jesus, Paul, and the majority of the apostles, there are very, very few moments when their audiences were pleased with their messages. In fact they were often hostile, angry and occasionally violent.

Messengers who are popular with the people are often looked down upon in the biblical testimony. For instance I Kings 22:12-14 says,

“All the prophets were prophesying thus, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead and prosper, for the LORD will give it into the hand of the king. Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably. But Micaiah said, As the LORD lives, what the LORD says to me, that I shall speak.”

Likewise, II Timothy 4:3-4 says

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”

I am also reminded of the strong words of John Chrysostom, as he considered the value of receiving honors and accolades,

“The waters are raging, and the winds are blowing, but I have no fear for I stand firmly upon a rock. What am I to fear? Is it death? Life to me means Christ, and death is gain. Is it exile? The earth and everything it holds belongs to the Lord. Is it loss of property? I brought nothing into this world, and I will bring nothing out of it. I have only contempt for the world and its ways, and I scorn its honors.”⁸³

Perhaps the conclusion is that there is great value in studying the congregation and receiving honest feedback. Yet ultimately preachers are not called to say pleasing words, but be faithful to the Spirit and the biblical testimony. We can not please everyone and we should not try.

Self Evaluation

What have I learned about myself through this project? The first is something that will likely continue to require my attention and diligence. Through this project, I have discovered that I am likely too concerned about the perceptions of the congregation. To be aware of the effect the sermon has on the congregation and to hope it has a positive impact is a good and appropriate concern. But as with many things it is a matter of balance and perspective.

I first noted this with the results from the first sermon in this study when the response from the congregation was overwhelmingly positive. Close to 90% of the congregation provided overwhelmingly positive feedback. And yet I found myself dwelling on a small minority who responded negatively. I wondered how I might address their needs and what adjustments I might make. This does not reflect a healthy balance, and in fact may degrade my ability to be the preacher our God has called me to be.

⁸³ Carl A. Volz, “The Genius of Chrysostom's Preaching,” *Christianity Today*, <http://www.ctlibrary.com/ch/1994/issue44/4424.html> (accessed November 23, 2012).

As identified above, first and foremost, I believe the preacher must rely on guidance from the Holy Spirit when preparing the sermon. If this is true, ultimately, I must also rely on the Spirit after the sermon and leave the results to Him. As a “people pleaser” this is something I continue to need to be aware of and guard against.

Secondly, when I began serving as a pastor I loved to study and prepare for Wednesday and Sunday evening studies. Nothing gave me greater joy than sharing what I had learned with my brothers and sisters, occasionally seeing deep understanding and growth.

Preaching on the other hand was a different story. Preaching was something I got through with ice cold hands and sweating brow. I rarely moved from behind the pulpit, or varied from a word-for-word manuscript, out of fear of mishandling His holy word.

Over the years I have found more confidence, and with confidence, freedom. And yet as I was going through this study I realized something for the first time: I have come to love preaching. From seeking the guidance of the Spirit, through the study, the hopefully artistic preparation, through the sometimes awkward invitation, I thoroughly enjoy the process and at this point in my life cannot imagine doing anything else.

The positive feedback from the congregation has given me a greater confidence and freedom. Additionally, leaving the results of the sermon to the Holy Spirit enables me to more free and enjoy, rather than dread, the sermonic moment.

When I interviewed to be part of the doctorate program, the director asked me why I wanted to be admitted. I responded, “To be better than I am.” With humility and gratitude, I believe this has been achieved through the three years of study, the interaction with my peer supervisor and peers, and this study. For this I am thankful.

The Weight of Preaching

There was one final, unexpected and important result of this project. Although I have never ceased to feel the importance of the weekly message, this project was such an incredible reminder of the great responsibility and weight of preaching. As I have considered the incredible lineage of preachers, from the prophets, to Paul, through Augustine, Martin Luther and Bonhoeffer, I have been reminded of the great responsibility of opening God's word with His people.

The relentless pressure of writing a weekly sermon, as well as the hope of facilitating a meaningful moment in the life of the faithful (often feeling disappointment), wears on a pastor. But such words as spoken by Bonhoeffer have reminded me again of both the great gift, and responsibility, of giving preaching my very best.

Bonhoeffer speaks of the sermon as the *sacramentum verbi* – the sacrament of the word.

“The Word of the sermon names sin, estrangement, and death, *and* the Word of the sermon proclaims forgiveness, reconciliation, and life. The Word of the sermon is not different from the Word incarnate in Jesus the Christ.”⁸⁴

Or perhaps even more powerful are the words of John Calvin,

“Let the pastors boldly dare all things by the word of God. . . . Let them constrain all the power, glory, and excellence of the world to give place to and to obey the divine majesty of this word. Let them enjoin everyone by it, from the highest to the lowest. Let them edify the body of Christ. Let them devastate Satan's reign. Let them pasture the sheep, kill the wolves, instruct and exhort the rebellious. Let them bind and loose thunder and lightning, if necessary, but let them do all according to the word of God.”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Worldly Preaching: Lectures on Homiletics*, (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1975) 126.

⁸⁵ John Piper, *The Divine Majesty of the Word - John Calvin: The Man and His Preaching*, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/biographies/the-divine-majesty-of-the-word> (accessed November 27, 2012).

Calvin also said that “preaching was like a visitation from God, through which He reaches out His hands to draw us to Himself.”⁸⁶ These words remind me of the great responsibility and weight of preaching.

Should we be students of preaching and of our congregations? By studying can we be more effective? This study has shown that it is certainly possible to greatly improve and preach sermons that are more clear, interesting, relevant and life-changing. Must we always rely first and foremost on the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit? Reliance on the Holy Spirit is an essential “given.” Does the weight of preaching require and deserve our very best? Without a doubt the answer must be, yes.

⁸⁶ Steven J. Cole, *John Calvin—the Man and His Preaching*, <http://www.fcfonline.org/content/1/articles/Calvin%20and%20%20Preaching.pdf> (accessed November 30, 2012).

APPENDIX A
Sermon Effectiveness Questionnaire
(**Baseline** with Percentages)

A Note from Pastor Cal

Dear Friends,

As some of you may know, over the last two years I have been working on a doctorate and am now coming to the final phase of the program. My hope, as I entered the program, was to improve my skills and become a better pastor and preacher. This final phase involves a project specifically designed to help me be a more effective communicator of the Gospel and **I very much need your help.**

Below you will find a **sermon questionnaire** about the current effectiveness of the messages. To help me with this final project I humbly ask that you complete this survey and then return it to the church. It shouldn't take more than 5-10 minutes. Please give me your honest feedback – even if it isn't complimentary. The goal is simply to be better at what I do for you. Please respond to the questions, not just in regard to the last sermon preached, but to most sermons over the last year.

Space has also been provided if you have any additional comments. Once you have completed the survey, please drop it in one of the boxes marked 'SERMON SURVEY' at most entrances. If you would like, you could also mail it to the church. There is no requirement to provide your name although you may if you wish.

I have only included one survey per bulletin. If you would like another copy, for multiple family members, there are additional surveys at the entrance to the sanctuary. The survey is also on the church website (adavillebaptist.com) for your convenience. Thank you so much – this means a great deal to me!

Sermon Questionnaire

1. On a scale from 1 (one) to 5 (five) please respond to the following questions with

ONE meaning strongly AGREE and **FIVE meaning strongly disagree**.

a. I generally find the sermon interesting.

1	2	3	4	5
55%	31%	5%	9%	0%

b. I find the sermon relevant to my life.

51%	27%	16%	4%	2%
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c. The sermon helps me to worship God.

49%	34%	9%	4%	4%
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d. Through the sermon I have a better understanding of God's expectation for my life.

49%	33%	7%	7%	4%
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e. The sermon contributes to me being more like Jesus.

49%	29%	11%	9%	2%
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f. I rarely drift off during the sermon.

38%	29%	22%	9%	2%
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g. Because of the sermon, my attitudes or actions toward others have changed in a positive way.

36%	38%	15%	7%	4%
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h. There are often one or more points in the sermon that I am likely to share with others.

22%	45%	16%	16%	0%
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i. I am rarely distracted by the preacher's mannerisms.

58%	29%	5%	4%	4%
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j. I find the integration of music with the theme of the sermon helpful to my understanding.

47%	27%	13%	6%	7%
-----	-----	-----	----	----

k. Visuals help me to understand the theme.

64%	18%	4%	7%	7%
-----	-----	----	----	----

l. I feel connected to the congregation and the preacher which help me understand the Scripture.

36%	34%	13%	10%	7%
-----	-----	-----	-----	----

m. Different delivery methods help me to stay connected during the service.

62%	13%	16%	5%	4%
-----	-----	-----	----	----

n. I am very comfortable with where I am in my spiritual life at this time.

18%	35%	36%	4%	7%
-----	-----	-----	----	----

o. I am at a point in my life when I am really seeking God.

60%	25%	11%	2%	2%
-----	-----	-----	----	----

p. I am at a point in my life when I am experiencing significant heartache and tribulation.

27%	11%	31%	20%	11%
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

q. I often feel connected to the message because it touches my heart.

34%	44%	9%	9%	4%
-----	-----	----	----	----

r. I feel connected to the sermon because it challenges me to think.

42%	38%	5%	11%	4%
-----	-----	----	-----	----

s. I often find the sermon interesting because it calls me to action.

36%	36%	16%	6%	4%
-----	-----	-----	----	----

t. I often find the sermon interesting because it makes me laugh.

32%	38%	13%	13%	4%
-----	-----	-----	-----	----

u. I connect to the sermon because it brings back a memory from my past.

16%	26%	44%	9%	5%
-----	-----	-----	----	----

v. I may not have 'liked' the sermon but it is often an important word for my life

40%	31%	18%	9%	2%
-----	-----	-----	----	----

2. If there are distractions during the sermon, what were they?

- a. Movement by congregation (29)
- b. People/teens (or others) texting, talking, laughing (12)
- c. Babies crying (5)
- d. When people leave during the invitation (5)
- e. Cleanliness in the sanctuary (3)
- f. Problem with microphone or sound system (3)
- g. Cell phones ringing (2)
- h. Recently cold in sanctuary
- i. Sometimes the sound is too loud
- j. When parents allow their children to misbehave
- k. Screaming
- l. Someone snoring in the back row every week
- m. Fiddling with the microphone
- n. My kids
- o. My attitude
- p. Visuals not on key
- q. Too much singing

3. I find myself drifting off when....

- a. When I don't get enough sleep (5)
- b. My attention span is 20 minutes at most (4)
- c. I allow issues I'm dealing with to creep into my thoughts (3)
- d. When you chase rabbits (2)
- e. Attach message to current events as much as possible
- f. The message reminds me of my family
- g. When people talk or leave
- h. My own mind
- i. The sermon is recapped when you go to the floor
- j. When the meditation is a mini-sermon
- k. When you bring up a thought provoking idea
- l. I try to write it down for consideration and prayer later

- m. I get more out of the music – God talks to me there
- n. You preach very calmly
- o. I can't follow the theme
- p. Drifting off is sometimes a good thing when a powerful point is made
- q. When other people preach
- r. About the 5th or 6th song
- s. Too much singing
- t. Hardly ever – don't even look at my watch
- u. Teach us to bring someone to Christ and why are some prayers unanswered
- v. When the sermon is long and boring
- w. Warm in sanctuary

4. The one or two things that would make the sermon more applicable to my life are:
- a. Know of nothing that would make the sermons more applicable. God's word is always applicable to my life. (7)
 - b. Visuals (2)
 - c. Add steps – "how to"
 - d. Things that would help me remember; saying, symbols, actions
 - e. Sometimes there are too many points in the sermon – a few that I can focus on are better than too many where I get lost
 - f. Would prefer a more conservative view of Scripture
 - g. Address social issues without the fear of hurting feelings
 - h. Sermon notes in bulletin and sermon points on screen
 - i. Sharing more life experiences, whether yours or others, and how they changed behavior
 - j. More preaching – less singing
 - k. More background about the Scripture passage
 - l. Remind us it is about others – not our selves
 - m. Sharing the Gospel with others

5. Age summary

Generally Positive	Neutral	Generally Negative
a. 17 and below		
b. 18-25		
1.5%		1.5%
c. 26-35		
9.5%		
d. 36-45		
11%	4.5%	1.5%
e. 46-55		
19%		1.5%
f. 56-65		
25%		
g. 66-75		
14%	1.5%	1.5%

h. 75 and above

8%		
----	--	--

6. Total across all ages

Generally Positive	Neutral	Generally Negative
83%	6%	11%

7. Female:

Generally Positive	Neutral	Generally Negative
83%	6%	11%

8. Male

Generally Positive	Neutral	Generally Negative
76%	14%	10%

9. Correlation between question 'P' (I am at a point in my life when I am experiencing significant heartache and tribulation) and negative responses: 71.4%

- a. Age, sex: 73, m, 59, f, 65, m, 70, f, 73, m
- b. Additionally, most other areas in the church or any recommendation about change were responded to in a negative manner.

10. Any other comments about the sermon?

- c. I dislike the stories about the military – as do others (6)
- d. Topics are applicable to my life – challenge me to live out my faith (3)
- e. Never mention a church member by name (3)
- f. I enjoy stories from military experience
- g. Your sermons cause me to soul search and examine my life, to study and pray
- h. Sermons are well prepared, well presented and applicable
- i. I love your sermons and all you do with them. God blesses me through you
- j. Less music
- k. Preaching is one of your strong points – well prepared and thought out
- l. Too much music – doesn't leave time for Bible teaching
- m. More Bible teaching like Wednesday and Sunday night
- n. Add points for further study
- o. I receive something every Sunday
- p. I enjoy your enthusiasm for Christ and those needing salvation
- q. I think the sermons are great! I always receive a blessing!
- r. We are blessed to have you and all our staff
- s. No visuals or drama
- t. Take the KJV to the pulpit
- u. You seem to be very sincere
- v. Uncomfortable subjects are difficult but very needed and necessary
- w. You got through my thick skull after many years of backsliding
- x. Your words, and God's hand, found me
- y. Always good

11. Notes:

- a. One survey was generally negative but ended with “not enough time for sermon and teaching” (making me wonder if they did not understand the scale of the survey)
- b. Another two were very similar to what is identified above
- c. Total survey responses: 67

APPENDIX B
Sermon Effectiveness Questionnaire
(Short Term Memory)

1. On a scale from 1 (one) to 5 (five) please respond to the following questions with one meaning strongly agree and five meaning strongly disagree.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| a. I found today's sermon interesting. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. I found today's sermon relevant to my life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. This sermon helped me to worship God. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. Through this sermon I have a better understanding of God's expectation for my life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. This sermon will contribute to me being more like Jesus. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| f. I rarely drifted off during the sermon. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| g. Because of this sermon, my attitudes or actions toward others will likely change in a positive way. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| h. There were one or more points in the sermon that I will likely share with others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| i. I was rarely distracted by the preacher's mannerisms. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| j. I found the integration of music with the theme of the sermon helpful to my understanding. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| k. Visuals helped me to understand the theme. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| l. I felt connected to the congregation and the preacher which helped me understand the Scripture. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| m. Different delivery methods help me to stay connected during the service. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| n. I am very comfortable with where I am in my spiritual life at this time. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| o. I am at a point in my life when I am really seeking God. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| p. I am at a point in my life when I am experiencing significant heartache and tribulation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| q. I connected to this message because it touched my heart. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| r. I connected to this sermon because it challenged me to think. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| s. I found this sermon interesting because | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| t. it called me to action. | |
| u. I found this sermon interesting because it made me laugh. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| v. I connected to this sermon because it brought back a memory from my past. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| w. I may not have 'liked' the sermon but it was an important word for my life | 1 2 3 4 5 |

2. What were the one, two or three points of the sermon that seemed most important to you?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. If there were distractions during the sermon, what were they?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

4. I found myself drifting off when....

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

5. The one or two things that would make the sermon more applicable to my life are:

a. _____

b. _____

6. I am a Christian. Yes or No.

7. If yes, I have been a Christian for _____ years.

8. My age is _____ My sex is _____

9. Any other comments about the sermon?

APPENDIX C
Sermon Effectiveness Questionnaire
(Long Term Memory)

(If you responded to a sermon questionnaire on **last week's** sermon, please do not complete this one)

1. **Last week** a sermon entitled _____ based upon the Scripture _____ was part of our worship service. What were the one, two or three points of the sermon that seemed most important to you?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. If there were distractions during the sermon, what were they?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. I found myself drifting off when....
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. The one or two things that would have made the sermon more applicable to my life were:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
4. I am a Christian. Yes or No.
5. If yes, I have been a Christian for _____ years.
6. On a scale from 1 (one) to 5 (five) please respond to the following questions with one meaning strongly agree and five meaning strongly disagree.
 - a. I found **last week's** sermon interesting. 1 2 3 4 5

- b. I found **last week's** sermon relevant to my life. 1 2 3 4 5
- c. The sermon helped me to worship God. 1 2 3 4 5
- d. Through **last week's** sermon I have a better understanding of God's expectation for my life. 1 2 3 4 5
- e. **Last week's** sermon will contribute to me being more like Jesus. 1 2 3 4 5
- f. I rarely drifted off during the sermon. 1 2 3 4 5
- g. Because of the sermon, my attitudes or actions toward others will likely change in a positive way. 1 2 3 4 5
- h. There were one or more points in the sermon that I shared with others. 1 2 3 4 5
- i. I was rarely distracted by the preacher's mannerisms. 1 2 3 4 5
- j. I found the integration of music with the theme of the sermon helpful to my understanding. 1 2 3 4 5
- k. Visuals helped me to understand the theme. 1 2 3 4 5
- l. I felt connected to the congregation and the preacher which helped me understand the Scripture. 1 2 3 4 5
- m. Different delivery methods helped me to stay connected during the service 1 2 3 4 5
- n. I am very comfortable with where I am in my spiritual life at this time. 1 2 3 4 5
- o. I am at a point in my life when I am really seeking God 1 2 3 4 5
- p. I am at a point in my life when I am experiencing significant heartache and tribulation 1 2 3 4 5
- q. I connected to this message because it touched my heart. 1 2 3 4 5

- r. I connected to this sermon because it challenged me to think. 1 2 3 4 5
- s. I found this sermon interesting because it called me to action. 1 2 3 4 5
- t. I found this sermon interesting because it made me laugh. 1 2 3 4 5
- u. I connected to this sermon because it brought back a memory from my past. 1 2 3 4 5
- v. I may not have 'liked' the sermon but it was an important word for my life 1 2 3 4 5
- w. My age is _____ My sex is _____
- x. Any other comments about **last week's** sermon?

APPENDIX D
Form to Decline Participation in the Study
(To be in the weekly bulletin before and during the study)

Friends!

As was discussed in a recent church conference, I will be conducting a doctoral study on the effectiveness of presented sermons. This will include recording responses of the congregation during, immediately after, and one week after the sermon is presented. This will continue for about six weeks.

Although all of the feedback will be completely anonymous and will ultimately be destroyed, I understand that some may choose **not to participate** in this study. Those who participate may be surveyed after the service, or provide feedback during the service through electronic devices, and be video recorded during the service. If you would prefer **to not participate**, please sign this form, and return it either in the offering plate or to the church office. If you prefer not to participate, I understand completely.

Thanks!

Pastor Cal

I prefer **not to** participate in this study.

(Your Signature)

APPENDIX E
SERMON 1, 9 SEPTEMBER 2012

<p style="text-align: center;">Adaville Baptist Church 9 September 2012 <u>Forgive, to be Forgiven</u> Narrative Sermon</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level of Connectivity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Time</p>
<p>Matthew 6:14 For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.</p>		
<p>Let us pray. (Slide 1: Scripture.) <i>ONCE UPON A TIME</i>, there was a woman that had a baby. To call her a “woman” was a bit of an overstatement. Truly she was just a child herself and far from ready to be a momma. But that didn’t matter now, because here she was, holding her brand new baby girl.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LT</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 minute</p>
<p>You know, every baby deserves to be cooed over; told she is beautiful, whispered to, and surrounded with love. But that didn’t happen very much for this baby. Perhaps it was because our new momma hadn’t received a lot of love and attention herself. Who knows? Whatever the reason, the baby was fed and clothed and provided for...but there was very little cooing, and even less love.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">High</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2 minutes</p>
<p>Instead, in a hundred little ways, a terrible belief was communicated. “<i>You, little one...were an accident. You, little one, are the reason my dreams are shattered.</i>” Sometimes it was said as a joke, disguised, not very well, with laughter. “<i>You, little one, ruined my life.</i>”</p>		
<p>“<i>Little ones</i>” do grow up, don’t they? And after years of not-so-subtle messages; (<i>You are not worthy of love</i>), the little one, now 16 herself, fled from her mother, trying desperately to find love...somewhere. Anywhere. Everywhere. Angry words, screaming hurt, slamming doors...and she was...gone. Completely, entirely, gone.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ST</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 minutes</p>
<p>A strange thing happened when “Little One” left. Momma realized, too late, how deeply she loved her. Momma realized what a huge, hurting hole Little One left behind. If anything good came from that terrible time, Momma returned to the faith of her childhood. It was the only thing that gave her any peace. And she <i>PRAYED</i>...oh how she prayed, several times a day! “<i>Lord Jesus, You protect Little One...please. Lord Jesus, bring her home. Oh God, give me one more chance to be a momma.</i>”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ST (LT)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4 minutes</p>
<p>Little One did come home about a year later, her own arms full of a brand new baby boy. Momma, now Grandma at the age of just 34, was so shocked, she didn’t realize or resist as the baby boy was pushed into her arms. “<i>YOU keep him. I can’t. I don’t know how.</i>”</p> <p>“<i>No, no!</i>” Grandma protested, “<i>No...you stay here. We’ll do this together. You and me.</i>” Little One was surprised by the offer and more surprised by the loving tone. But not surprised or convinced enough to stay. “<i>No! I won’t mess a child up as bad as you messed me up.</i>” It all happened so fast, too fast, and Little One was out the door. Grandma looked for the next several days but she was just gone, again. And so it was just Grandma and Baby-Boy.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">5 minutes</p>
<p>She was holding him one night, just a few days later, when the “word” came to her. Maybe it was an angel that whispered it, maybe the Spirit Himself, but she heard it, from the inside out – just one word: “<i>redemption</i>”. This was her second chance. And she got down on her knees, with Baby-Boy tight against her body, and swore to God that she would NOT make the same mistakes again. She promised to love him, and nurture him, sacrifice, be patient – what ever it took.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">High</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6 minutes</p>

<p>And you know what; Grandma was as good as her word. She cooed like a dove, cried when he cried, laughed at his silly jokes, and whispered words of deep love. A funny thing happens when you love a baby like that. He shot up like a weed, but bloomed like a flower! It wasn't always easy; there were fights about this and that. Still, Grandma beamed with pride over her Baby Boy. He didn't erase the guilt she felt over her own daughter – but it was the best thing she knew to do.</p>	High	7 minutes
<p>The night before graduation, he was casually trying to slide out of the house, as young men will do. <i>"See you later grandma – be back in a while."</i> In one smooth and practiced motion she was out of her chair like a ninja, by his side, holding on to his right ear. He circled around her, unsuccessfully trying to get away. She had him bent over to her height with a death grip on his ear, <i>"Baby-Boy where do you think you are going?"</i> He didn't answer but just continued to spin around her saying, <i>"Let go, let go...you have to let go Grandma."</i> He finally stopped and said again, slower, calmly, softly, and this time with more meaning, <i>"Grandma, you – have – to – let – go."</i></p> <p><i>"Hmmpf,"</i> she said, finally releasing him. <i>"I know Baby-Boy. It's just...I..."</i> <i>"I know Grandma. I love you too. I'll be home at 11:00, OK?"</i></p> <p><i>"Hmmpf,"</i> she replied, not able to get much more out. He bent over and kissed her forehead, and her beloved redemption walked out the door.</p>	High	8 minutes
<p>On the other side of town there was a boy who was invisible. Of course he wasn't really invisible – he had just been treated as if he was all his life. No cooing or gently whispered words, but only silence. There were no rules or curfews. No one cared enough to set any. He had not been told about the love of God nor experienced the love of a father. As long as he didn't cause problems, he could do as he liked.</p> <p>He was transparent at school too. It often amazed him that he could walk right down the middle of a hallway, surrounded by hundreds of other screaming children, and no one seemed to notice him. The rules were the same at school as they were at home. If you didn't cause too many problems, you advanced to the next grade – and became transparent for another year. Except...the thing is...being invisible isn't as cool as it sounds. And after a while, invisible loneliness transforms into something else; a smoldering anger just looking for a place to explode.</p>		9 minutes
<p>Baby-Boy had been at the pre-graduation party for about an hour. He was surrounded by friends – why not? He had learned to receive love and give love and people were simply drawn to him. They laughed and poked at each other, celebrating their youth and their indestructible futures. And so it was only natural to poke at the new kid as he came in.</p> <p><i>"What are YOU doing here? Dude, who invited YOU."</i> He wasn't part of the group. He wasn't part of ANY group. No one even knew his name. Someone half heartedly through a can at him. They really didn't intend to hit him with it, but they didn't care when it did. No apology – just laughter. And so the one who had been transparent all of his life, turned around, seething with an anger that had been growing for 15 years, and then left the party that clearly wasn't for him.</p>		10 minutes
<p>Everyone was surprised and a little amused when he returned. They were even more surprised when he pulled the gun. There wasn't much love at his house but there were lots of guns. Some dove for cover and others just froze. The gun was pointed at the ground when he began to softly speak. <i>"I'm not invisible now, am I? I'm not invisible now, am I?"</i> Of course no one understood what he meant. He just kept saying it over and over. <i>"I'm not invisible now, am I? I'M NOT INVISIBLE NOW AM I?"</i> He began to wave the gun wildly around and perhaps he was the most surprised of all when the gun went off. <i>(Slide 2: Audible gunshot, four rapid pictures of a happy boy at different ages, then fade to white.)</i></p>		11 minutes
		12 minutes
		13 minutes

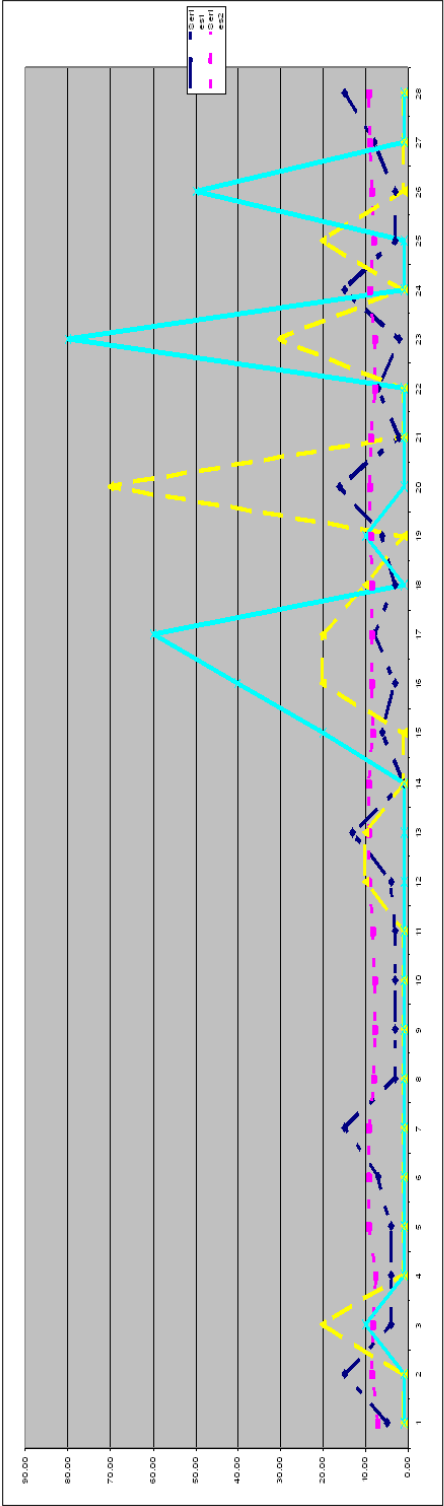
<p>(Pause) There was a knock on Grandma's door later that night. (Three knocks on pulpit). Muffled whispers. Empty apologies. Hollow condolences. Grandma opened her mouth and a mooooooaaaaan came out from a place she didn't know existed. If angels weep, surely they wept for her. And the Spirit interceded with groanings too deep for words.</p>		14 minutes
<p>Grandma died that night. Oh, she kept breathing. She walked, and worked and talked, and sometimes smiled with her lips, but not her eyes. She continued to serve in church, but there was little joy in it. She gave, but was not generous. She was kind but not caring. She was able to work through her anger at God – it wasn't His fault. It was the animal who fired the shot. And so when the animal received a life sentence, without the possibility of parole, Grandma did not question the justice, but simply said, "good" and retreated behind a wall of hate and unforgiveness. (Slide 3: Chalk line of a dead body.) And she was as empty as a chalk outline on a black floor.</p>	High ST (3)	15 minutes
<p>Years passed. Empty, angry, dead years. And more years passed before she received the letter. It came from something called the <i>Justice Initiative</i>. They were a group that didn't believe that a sentence of "life without parole," especially for minors, was "fair". And, the letter asked, "If she felt the same way, would she be interested in meeting the one convicted, and perhaps even intercede for him at a hearing?"</p>	ST High	16 minutes
<p>At first she just stared at the letter, amazed that anyone would have the nerve. After a while she laughed a laugh that was more angry than amused. Then she began to slowly, viciously, crumple that letter until it couldn't get any smaller and then let it simply fall to the ground in disgust. And there it stayed for many days. Just laying there like a spiritual cancer, desperately needing to be cut out.</p>	High	17 minutes
<p>Sometimes in the evening she would just sit and look at that wadded up letter. Sometimes she would create terrible scenarios in her mind about how she would hurt the convict. Sometimes she would drift back to her failure with her own daughter. Most of the time she just stared, dead inside.</p>		18 minutes
<p>Finally the Spirit spoke unexpectedly...just four words: "forgive, to be forgiven." And if angels hold their breath, then surely they must have, waiting. Grandma had heard the voice of the Spirit only a few times in her entire life. Mostly He seemed more of a feeling, guiding her here and there. But just a few times she had she "heard" His voice. "Forgive, to be forgiven." Her response was immediate and decisive: "No. NO! NO! Absolutely – not ever! I will not!"</p>	LT (2)	19 minutes
<p>Now for you who have heard the Spirit's voice, you know these things to be true. First, He is persistent. Secondly, although He speaks only a few words, they are often overflowing with meaning. "Forgive, to be forgiven." Which could be translated in heart language; "Forgive so you might live. Because you are dying, precious one. Forgive so you might have peace. Forgive because you have been forgiven so very much." That reminds me of what a wise man said once. "Forgiveness is unlocking the door to set someone free and...realizing you were the prisoner."</p>	ST LT (4)	20 minutes
<p>It didn't happen all at once. To think it would, would be, well, just foolish. The first few meetings were terribly hard. Grandma sat like an ice cold stone. The convict asked for forgiveness, but said he didn't deserve it, or expect it. On a really good day, she screamed at him in rage and then melted into tears. And so did he. Every time Grandma wanted to quit and withdraw the Spirit would whisper again; "Forgive, to be forgiven. Forgive so you might live."</p>	ST	
<p>Weeks and months of visits went by. One day Grandma withdrew behind her wall and the convict began talking. Just talking to fill the empty space. He rambled about being invisible; unwanted, an accident, undesired and unloved. He talked, to no one in particular, about being alone, even when</p>	ST (2) LT (6)	20 minutes

<p>surrounded by people. He talked about the giant hole that had burned within him. He talked about being redeemed. And although she did not appear to be listening, she heard every word, and every word reminded Grandma of her own baby girl, her own Little One, and her own failures. <i>“Forgive, to be forgiven. Forgive so you might live.”</i> And hot tears rolled down both their faces.</p>		
<p>The court date came and honestly Grandma had no idea what she was going to do. The <i>Justice Initiative</i> people had tried to prepare her, but she was far from ready. The judge looked down upon her in regal robes. <i>“Mam, I understand you would like to make a statement on behalf of the prisoner?”</i> She hesitated. <i>“Mam? Your statement?”</i> Just then a younger woman slipped quietly, unseen, into the back of the courtroom. Little One, Grandma’s own daughter sat silently, trying her best to be very small, in a very big room.</p>	ST	21 minutes
<p>Grandma cleared her voice, so wanting to turn and run away. <i>“I guess...I suppose I have just come to think that perhaps life with the possibility of parole, well...isn’t exactly right.”</i> And then she stopped. It wasn’t the ringing endorsement that some had hoped for. The judge waited, and then asked, <i>“Mam, is there anything else you would like to add?”</i> She didn’t respond but just looked down at the ground. <i>“Well then,”</i> said the judge, <i>“I will take all the testimony into account and return a judgment. But I must say that I haven’t heard anything that would cause me to over turn the previous sentence.”</i></p>	LT ST (7)	22 minutes
<p><i>“All rise!”</i> People started shuffling about, but grandma stood frozen. <i>“Wait,”</i> she whispered. <i>“WAIT!”</i> Louder this time. <i>“Mam,”</i> replied the judge, <i>“the proceedings have concluded.”</i> <i>“No.”</i> said Grandma. <i>“I have a right to be heard. NO! If anyone in this world has a right, I have a right to be heard!”</i> (Slide 4: blank).</p>	High	23 minutes
<p><i>“You listen to me! This isn’t right anymore. I get a say!”</i> Well, everyone just froze. <i>“I hated him for what he did. I despised him. And I played it over in my mind a thousand times how I would hurt him. But the only person I hurt...was me. Of course I blamed him! And then I heard the story about how his family treated him. They might as well have tortured him! So do I blame his father instead? Or his father’s, father? How far back do you want to go? Because, I tell you I’ve tried, and it really doesn’t help!”</i></p>		24 minutes
<p><i>“And if his father is guilty...well so am I because I did the exact same thing to my daughter. Oh God, forgive me, the very same thing! I drove her away. So someone has to break this chain because I can’t carry the weight any more. I need to forgive so I can be forgiven. It has killed me. So you listen to me, because I have a say. It stops with ME. It stops NOW. He’s not the same boy anymore. And if I can forgive Judge, then by God, surely you can forgive too.”</i></p>		25 minutes
<p>Suddenly Grandma was very aware that every one was staring intently at her. She turned quickly; ready to run out of the courtroom. She turned...and looked directly into the eyes of her daughter, her Little One, who opened her arms and grabbed her momma...and her momma grabbed her right back. And a resurrection breath sucked in between Grandma’s lips, inhaling life deeply for the first time in a very long time. If angels rejoice, and surely they do, then there must have been quite a celebration.</p>		
<p>It wasn’t always easy from that day forward. To think it would, would be, well, just foolish. Forgiveness, well...continues. But at least now she is truly alive. <i>Forgive, to be forgiven. Forgive so you might live.</i></p>	ST (3)	
<p>Let us pray. (Slide 5: <i>“Forgiveness is a matter of life and death.”</i>)</p>	High LT (8)	26 minutes

	High	
	High	27 minutes
	ST (2) LT (5)	
	High	

APPENDIX F
Sermon Effectiveness Graph
(All Four Methods of Data Collection)
Week 1: Narrative Sermon

Sermon Effectiveness Graph
(All Four Methods of Data Collection)
Week 1: Narrative Sermon



- Blue: Electronic Feedback (dash - dot)
- Pink: Biometric (Video) Feedback (dot)
- Yellow: Short Term Memory Survey (long dash)
- Aqua: Long Term Memory Survey (solid)

APPENDIX G
SERMON 2, 16 SEPTEMBER 2012

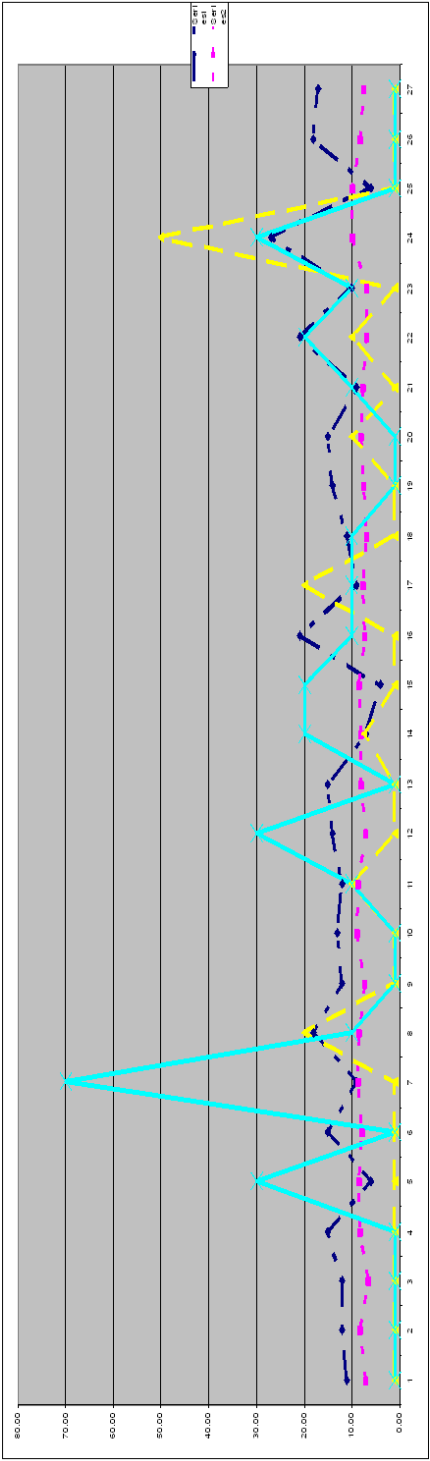
<p style="text-align: center;">Adaville Baptist Church <i>The Heavens are Telling of the Glory of God</i> 16 September 2012 Expository Sermon</p>	Level of Connectivity	Time
<p>Psalm 19:1 THE heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. 2 Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. 6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. 10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. 12 Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. 13 Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.</p> <p>Let us pray.</p> <p>C.S. Lewis called Psalm 19 “<i>the greatest poem in the Bible.</i>” This is a Psalm, probably written by King David, about 1000 years before the birth of our Savior. We don’t know what the occasion of him writing this is. Even if we don’t know the exact background of the Psalm, perhaps we have enough in common with King David that we can make an educated guess. Sure, King David lived 3000 years ago, and yes, our cultures couldn’t be much more different. Yet don’t we have this in common? Haven’t there been times in your life when God has surprisingly, unexpectedly, revealed Himself to you in such a new and powerful way that you are just stopped in your tracks.</p> <p>Maybe it was a ‘coincidence’ that you knew was so much more than that. Maybe it was something someone said that you knew was a ‘message’, specifically for you. Or just the right amount of money just ‘showed up’ just in time. A dream that was so much more than a dream. Whatever ever it was, don’t we have this in common with King David: sometimes God amazingly, wonderfully, reveals Himself and the only choice we seem to have is to stop and worship Him.</p> <p>Because that is exactly what this Psalm is about. This Psalm could be broken down in to four parts. (SLIDE #1) God revealing Himself through the majesty of the night skies. God revealing His power through the movement of the sun. God revealing Himself through the Law and the Scriptures. And finally, the only possible response to a God that is so amazing.</p> <p>Psalm 19:1 THE heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. 2 Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. David, looking up at the expanse of the night sky, seems dumbstruck. He says that daily we are surrounded by words, and opinions, and commentary...that in the end come to nothing. Yet the moon</p>	LT (3)	1 minute
		2 minutes
		3 minutes
		4 minutes
		5 minutes
		6 minutes
	LT (6)	7 minutes

<p>and the stars, the heavens and all the expanse say no words, and yet speak more clearly, reveal more about God than 1000 sermons or a 1000 songs.</p>		
<p>Haven't we all experienced that in our lives? When I was a teenager in Colorado, before I knew Jesus as Savior, I found myself lost and alone in the Rocky Mountains, in a giant field of Aspen trees, on a beautiful fall day. The trees were shimmering gold and the leaves blowing in the breeze sounded like a waterfall. As I stood there I had this overwhelming feeling that I needed to either get down on my knees or run away – because the presence of God was overwhelming.</p>	<p>LT ST (2)</p>	<p>8 minutes</p>
<p>In college I walked around a giant crater in the Arizona desert. It was made by a huge asteroid that had hurtled through the solar system and smashed into the earth perhaps millions of years ago. It took us all night to walk around that huge crater and throughout the night I began to feel smaller and smaller in relation to the creation of God.</p>		<p>9 minutes</p>
<p>Maybe for you it was the wind blowing at sunset on the beach. Or standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon. Or a thunderstorm that both frightened and caused awe. <i>Can you think of a time when nature called you to worship?</i> Where words were not only unnecessary but simply were too small? As if nature was telling us to just hush, be still, and know He is God.</p>		<p>10 minutes</p>
<p>We aren't very good at being quiet are we? We fill every moment of every day with words, music...noise of all kinds. Perhaps because if we did stop and listen, what choice would we have but to step off the throne of our own lives, and bow before Him as He takes His rightful place.</p>		<p>11 minutes</p>
<p>David begins with God revealing Himself through the expanse of the night sky. And then he says that the movement of the sun reveals the greatness of God. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. 6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.</p>	<p>ST LT (3)</p>	<p>12 minutes</p>
<p>Not only does the expanse of the night sky call us to worship but so does the sun. (SLIDE #2) David is saying that there is an order that the sun provides – inescapable; the day and the seasons pass regardless of what we do. No matter what we do, no matter what our problems, the sun will rise tomorrow and a new day will begin. And just as steady and constant as is the sun, so is your God.</p>	<p>LT</p>	<p>13 minutes</p>
<p>David notes the heat of the sun is inescapable as well. There is nothing that is hidden beneath the sun. There is nothing that can escape the sun, out run sun. You can't pretend the sun isn't there. There is an orderliness to creation that says <i>yes, this is not random, but there is a grand design, and therefore a grand Designer.</i></p>		<p>14 minutes</p>
<p>(SLIDE #3) Albert Einstein, one of the greatest minds of the 20th century, once said, <i>"The more I study science, the more I believe in God. We see a Universe marvelously arranged and obeying certain laws, but only dimly understand these laws. Our limited minds cannot grasp the mysterious force that moves the constellations."</i> We must simply come as children before such power. <i>"That, it seems to me, is the attitude of even the most intelligent human being toward God."</i></p>	<p>ST LT (5)</p>	<p>15 minutes</p>
<p>(SLIDE #4) God reveals Himself through the majesty of the night sky, and the order of the movement of the sun. Finally, King David says, God reveals Himself through His holy word. Perhaps we would not place the Bible beside the revelation of the expanse of the night sky or the intensity and power of the sun – but that is exactly what the Psalmist does.</p>	<p>LT (2)</p>	<p>16 minutes</p>
<p>Yet when we stop and consider the incredible gift of what we call the Bible, we can begin to understand David did, and we should too. (SLIDE #5) Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both</p>		

<p>joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.</p> <p>Has there been a time in your life when you opened the Bible and ‘stumbled’ on a passage that dealt exactly with what you are dealing with? Say amen if you have. Or how about a time when you are studying a passage for the 10th time, but this time you know it’s a word for you? Say amen if you have.</p>	LT ST (2)	17 minutes
<p>A few months after I became a Christian, a friend of mine called me at work and said, “<i>Hey, let’s sneak out of work and go play racquet ball this afternoon.</i>” Well that sounded like a good idea and we snuck out, started playing and worked up a good sweat. About 15 minutes, my friend took a big back swing, and caught me literally right between the eyes with the head of his racquet. It opened up an inch and a half gash right between my eyes, and because I was sweaty, it looked like there was blood everywhere. Well, that ended that game!</p>	LT	18 minutes
<p>I went out side, my shirt pressed to head, and sat in the front seat of my Volkswagen, before I tried to drive. As I was sitting there, a small piece of paper blew beside my feet. I picked it up and it had a Bible verse written on and that’s all. Proverbs 18:9. I didn’t know the Scripture and so I threw it on the passenger seat and drove home. Later that night I began to wonder what the Bible verse was and so I looked it up. (SLIDE #6) Proverbs 18:9 He also who is slack in his work Is brother to him who destroys. I swear – completely true story. And I got the message, <i>right between the eyes!</i> And my goodness that is such a small example of the power of God’s word!</p>	ST	19 minutes
<p>Because God’s word is alive! It has been preserved perfectly by the power of the Spirit for 3400 years. It reveals the love of God, the power of God, the plan of God. So of course the Psalmist would say His word is right, pure, enlightening the eyes, true, more desirable than gold, and sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.</p>		20 minutes
<p>Einstein also said this: “<i>There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.</i>” I believe the second is true. That we are surrounded by miracles set in motion by the voice, the hand, and the heart of God. What other conclusion can we come to as we stop and consider God who reveals Himself through creation, through His holy word, the sacrifice of His only Son Jesus, and the continuing indwelling of His Spirit?</p>	LT	21 minutes
<p>But that’s only one of two important questions. The second is this; <i>how will you respond to such a God?</i> Before we get to the fourth and last section, I’d like to show you just a brief video clip. It’s simply about a man, lost at sea. (VIDEO CLIP: Joe and the Volcano; “Thank You for my life.”)</p>	ST LT (2)	22 minutes
<p>I think that video gets it about right. When faced with the awesome self revelation of God, perhaps the best thing we can do is simply raise our hands in praise. Or kneel down before an awesome God and worship. (SLIDE #7) That’s what the last section of our Psalm says. Forgive me for my presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me. In other words <i>don’t let me think more of myself than I should. Because You are God, and I am simply Your creation.</i></p>	LT	23 minutes
<p>(SLIDE #7) All of these things call us to worship and if we are still, if we listen, the only natural response is one of humility and awe and yes, worship. And in response, David, our teacher and example, prays this beautiful prayer. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer. May this be our prayer as well.</p> <p>Let us pray.</p>	ST (5) LT (3)	24 minutes

APPENDIX H
Sermon Effectiveness Graph
(All Four Methods of Data Collection)
Week 2: Expository Sermon

Sermon Effectiveness Graph
(All Four Methods of Data Collection)
Week 2: Expository Sermon



Blue: Electronic Feedback (dash - dot)
Pink: Biometric (Video) Feedback (dot)
Yellow: Short Term Memory Survey (long dash)
Aqua: Long Term Memory Survey (solid)

APPENDIX I
SERMON 3, 23 SEPTEMBER 2012

<p style="text-align: center;">Adaville Baptist Church 23 September 2012 <u>Before Courage</u> Biographical Sermon</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level of Connectivity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Time</p>
<p>I Kings 17:1 NOW Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word. 2 The word of the LORD came to him, saying, 3 Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there. 5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook. 7 It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">1 minute</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Let us pray.</p> <p>I have five pictures this morning that I would like to show you. As I show, what I would like you to do is see if you can determine what they all have in common. (Slide #1) Of course this goes back to WWII and the Battle for Iwo Jima. What an incredible moment in American history. (Slide #2) Not as significant on a world level, but a great moment in sports history, as the Baltimore Colts, led by Johnny Unitas, defeated the NY Giants for the second year in a row to the NFL Championship. (Slide #3) You may not be a soccer fan, but you probably know this is Pele, one of the most successful and greatest soccer players of all time. (Slide #4) Another iconic moment when Cassius Clay defeated Sonny Liston and a moment later Clay celebrated an incredible victory. (Slide #5) Finally, most recently, the fab five brought home the gold in the 2012 Summer Olympics.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">2 minutes</p>
<p>So the question is what do all of these pictures, these people, and these events have in common? Well the answer is obvious, isn't it? They all are great moments of incredible victory. Some are so iconic they are burned into our memory. We rejoice along side those that raise the flag. We celebrate with them as they stand atop the Olympic podium. We may even have fantasies of experiencing such victories our selves.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">3 minutes</p>
<p>But I think these pictures, these people and events have something else in common. Before any great victory there are hundreds and thousands of hours of quiet preparation, where there are no cheering crowds. For every great victory, there was a coach, a trainer, or a drill sergeant that pushed each one beyond the place they believed they could go. And it is likely that over those thousands of hours of preparation there were hundreds of times that every future champion thought about quitting. Getting up, wiping the sweat from their brow, and turning their back on their destiny.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">4 minutes</p>
<p>(Slide #6) Brothers and sisters, I believe it is the same way in the life of faith. It was true in the life of Moses, and Jeremiah, and the life of Paul and certainly in the life of Elijah. I was drawn to speak about the life and character of Elijah this week. And I began to read various articles and commentaries and one described Elijah as "<i>a man of conviction, confidence, and courage.</i>" That's good stuff – we like to hear about men with such characteristics. Victorious men of <i>conviction, confidence, and courage!</i> But I also believe there is something BEFORE courage, and even more important than courage. And we see what comes before courage in the passage we read together this morning.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">5 minutes</p>
<p>(Slide #7) These are the very first words we read about Elijah, one of the</p>		

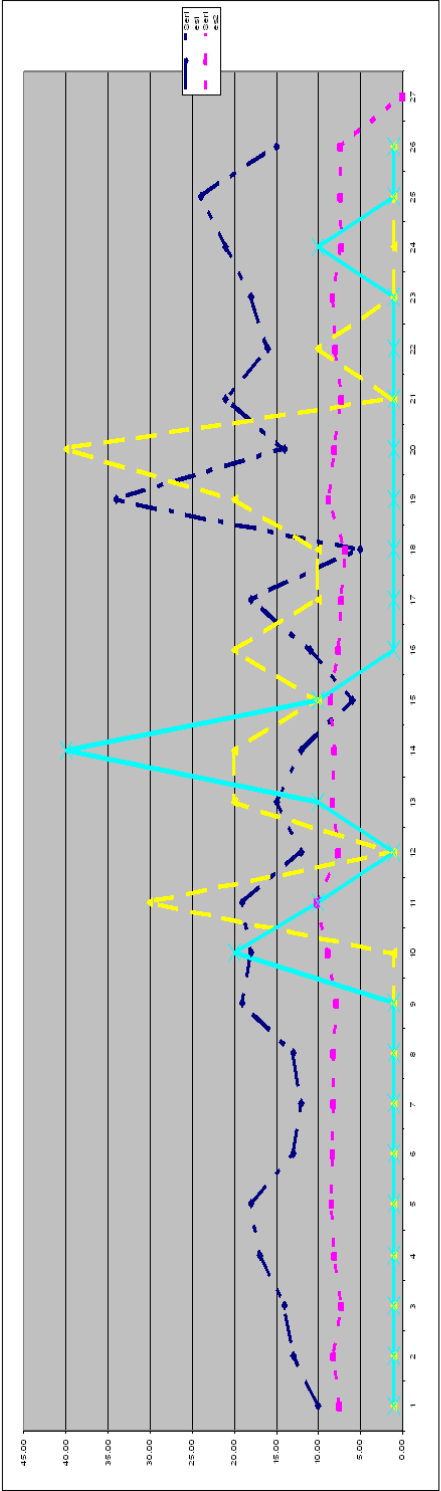
<p>greatest prophets of God in the Old Testament. I Kings 17:1 NOW Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word. No introduction or background is offered about Elijah. No dramatic prophetic call; no burning bush or burning coal touched to his lips. No one even knows where Tishba is today. We know Gilead was a rough area and we learn that Elijah was a rough man, probably self sufficient. He was far from being an insider and not educated or wealthy.</p>		6 minutes
<p>On the other hand, we do know quite a bit about King Ahab. Ahab is the King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and in 1 Kings 16:33 is says of him; Ahab also made the Asherah. Thus Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him. Which is really saying something, because so many of the kings were really bad. And Ahab just had an abomination of a wife named Jezebel, whose name literally is an invitation to the god Baal. Jezebel is the true leader of Israel. They are an evil and powerful duo and our first introduction to Elijah is him confronting them, and telling them that there would be no rain for three years because of his sin, and the sins of Israel. And that's after it already had not rained for six months! Talk about courage!</p>		7 minutes
<p>And immediately after Elijah confronts them, something very strange happens. Now Elijah will lead an amazing life. (Slide #8) We know that he will continue to confront Ahab and Jezebel and shine a light on their evil. We know Elijah will stand firm against the prophets of Baal. That he will openly taunt them, and ultimately put them to death. Elijah will call down fire from heaven, prophesy the bloody death of Jezebel, and ultimately be taken to heaven in a fiery chariot. But BEFORE all of the <i>conviction, confidence, and courage</i> of Elijah, the Lord tells Elijah, 3 Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.</p>		8 minutes
<p>How strange! So strange in fact that it should draw us close to this passage and encourage us to ask the question; <i>What are the lessons from the brook Cherith?</i> (Slide #9) Perhaps number one is this: Champions of faith should expect periods of drought. Moses was sent into the wilderness. Paul, after his incredible Damascus Road experience, was set apart and set aside. And so is Elijah. Later Elijah would face 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah. Later he face Ahab and Jezebel. In fact Elijah would speak for God to an entire nation. But BEFORE all of the <i>conviction, confidence, and courage</i>, Elijah would need the quiet time of preparation with God. He would need quiet intimacy time to learn the power and provision of God. In the quiet of the brook Cherith, Elijah learned, not to rely on his own strength, but the limitless power of God.</p>		9 minutes
<p>And if we are going to be Champions of faith we should expect periods of drought as well. I have seen far too many painful times someone step out boldly for God, answer a call, move forward to baptism, begin a new ministry...and then the drought begins. Naysayers speak up, trials heighten, the going gets tough and too many tragic times, people run away from their calling, their church, and their life of faith. Instead of seeing it as a time of preparation for greater service and greater usefulness to God's kingdom. No Olympic gold medalist ever accidentally slipped up on top of the Olympic podium. And spiritual <i>conviction, confidence, and courage</i>, doesn't just accidentally happen either. We must allow ourselves to be set apart and set aside. Whether you are in a time of drought or not, know the timeless precept of the Bible: without a continuous intimate relation with God, there will be no true power in your life.</p>	<p>ST (3) LT (2)</p> <p>LT</p>	<p>10 minutes</p> <p>11 minutes</p> <p>12 minutes</p>
<p>(Slide #10) Number two is this: God's direction includes provision.</p>		

<p>Verse 5 says So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook. When I was in the Army we used to have a saying: <i>You would never ask someone to dig a hole, but not give them a shovel!</i> That would be bad leadership. If you ask a soldier to do something you make sure they are equipped. And so it is with our generous, loving, and wise heavenly Father.</p>	ST (2) LT	13 minutes
<p>But do you know what I have learned about God's provision? It will rarely be what we expect, it won't be what we want, it will often be bizarre, and it will be exactly what we need. That's such a good statement I want to say it again! It will rarely be what we expect, it won't be what we want, it will often be bizarre, and it will be exactly what we need!</p> <p><i>Ravens! Are you kidding me!</i> But day after day they would come. And Elijah, day by day must have grown in his faith and confidence. <i>My God WILL provide!</i> And years later, in those moments of self doubt; <i>am I doing the right thing? Am I up to this task? Am I really doing God's will...</i>he could think back about how God had supernaturally provided...and would certainly again. He could remember it wasn't about his abilities but God's supernatural provision. Trust it! Relax and revel in it! Which leads us to the third point. (Slide #11)</p>	ST (2) LT (4)	14 minutes
<p>Learn to trust God one day at a time. Did you know that we can actually only live in the present tense? <i>Well Cal, that's a silly question. Of course we know you can only live in the present moment!</i> I don't think we do and we sure don't act like it. Our minds tend to drift to the past, present and future, all at the same time. We have hurts and disappointments in the past that we worry about and carry around like they were something we can change. We are constantly thinking about the future, worrying about this and that. But not Elijah – not at this point.</p>	ST	15 minutes
<p>2 The word of the LORD came to him, saying, 3 Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. I know what my first question would be! <i>HOW LONG! Let's talk about this raven thing – I'm not too sure about that. When You say meat does that include beef and chicken? I could really use some details here. Will there be WIFI? Can I bring my iPad.</i> No...no, he probably didn't ask that – but we sure would. We want the entire path laid out with all the details and then we will decide if we will begin. Except that's not really faith is it?</p>	ST (2) LT	16 minutes
<p>God PROMISES us DAILY provision. Throughout the Scriptures that's the model that will keep His children in close and loving relationship with Him. From daily manna in the wilderness to the very words of Jesus: Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? 31 Do not worry then, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear for clothing?" 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Abide and enjoy His daily provision! Let go of the past and the future and enjoy your heavenly Father right now.</p>	ST	17 minutes
<p>(Slide #12) Finally, the Brook Cherith teaches us that a dried up brook may be a sign of God's pleasure in us – not displeasure. When we see great trials in our lives often our first reaction is; <i>oh no – something's wrong!</i> And sometimes that's the case – God will use trials in our lives to point out a short coming and draw us back to Him. That's a perfectly correct Biblical</p>	ST	18 minutes

<p>principle. But another Biblical principle is sometimes God is calling you to a greater work and the trials are there to prepare you, strengthen you, and refine or get you to move on to that new calling because now you are ready!</p> <p>Verse 7 says It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. I am afraid my first reaction would be <i>Oh come on! I just got this brook fixed up the way I like it. I've carved out a place out to sit and find some shade...I've named all the ravens, there's Bill, and Bob, and Baltimore...cleared out the creek a little bit...and about the time I got comfortable...the brook dries up! Come on!</i></p> <p>Our first reaction often is panic and disappointment when it could just as easily be God saying, <i>well done. You have learned in the quiet of the Cherith to rely on Me. You're ready to move on and to be a champion of the faith.</i> You are being trained for greater things – rejoice!</p> <p>We all admire the great champions of history. We celebrate when the athlete throws her arms up in victory or the soldier wins the great battle. We have some athletes in our church; football players, soccer players, volleyball players, golfers, and tennis players. Musicians and academics that are striving for excellence. Some may even have desires to be great in their chosen field.</p> <p>But let me ask you this. Do you have a desire to be great in the Kingdom of God? Because all of those others fields of endeavor are good, but none are eternal. None are what you are created for.</p> <p>(Slide #13) James 5:17 says Elijah was a man with a nature <u>like ours</u>, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.</p> <p>Don't we all have a desire to be a person like that...like Elijah! A man of <i>conviction, confidence, and courage!</i> We admire men and women with those traits. We want to be like Elijah and I think in our own way, following our own calling, we can. We just need to remember that there is something before courage: a love for, and a reliance in, the God of all power and provision.</p> <p>Let us pray.</p>	<p>ST (2)</p> <p>ST (2)</p> <p>ST (4)</p> <p>ST</p> <p>LT</p>	<p>19 minutes</p> <p>20 minutes</p> <p>21 minutes</p> <p>22 minutes</p> <p>23 minutes</p> <p>24 minutes</p> <p>25 minutes</p>
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APPENDIX J
Sermon Effectiveness Graph
(All Four Methods of Data Collection)
Week 3: Biographical Sermon

Sermon Effectiveness Graph
(All Four Methods of Data Collection)
Week 3: Biographical



- Blue: Electronic Feedback (dash - dot)
- Pink: Biometric (Video) Feedback (dot)
- Yellow: Short Term Memory Survey (long dash)
- Aqua: Long Term Memory Survey (solid)

APPENDIX K
SERMON 4, 30 SEPTEMBER 2012

<p style="text-align: center;">Adaville Baptist Church 30 September 2012 <u><i>What's Wrong with the World?</i></u> Topical Sermon</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level of Connectivity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Time</p>
<p>Mark 14:22 While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, Take it; this is My body. (Song by the choir)</p> <p>I Corinthians 12:12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot says, Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. 19 If they were all one member, where would the body be? /// 24 ... But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, 25 so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.</p> <p>Let us pray. (Song by the choir)</p> <p>G.K. Chesterton was a noted writer in England in the early 20th century. He was once asked the question, <u><i>What's Wrong with the World?</i></u> Good question! It's the same question many of us have asked, especially in a time of elections. Many people have their answers to the question, and offered solutions are abundant. The economy is at the top of most of our lists. Foreign affairs, how to extricate ourselves from war and still feel safe, health care, poverty, immigration, global warming...on and on.</p> <p>But what if I was to offer that none of those of things are really what's wrong with the world, but only symptoms of a greater problem? <u><i>What's Wrong with the World?</i></u> What if I offered to you that the core answer to the question that we feel disconnected and separate from each other and from our Father in heaven? Might be hard to swallow?</p> <p>Yet through out the New Testament, the words of Jesus, and the teaching of Paul, we hear this imagery of being "<i>in Christ</i>". That we are connected as the "<i>body of Christ</i>." Over, and persistently over. Far more than metaphor or poetry. For instance Colossians 2:19 says and not holding fast to the head, (that being Christ) from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.</p> <p>Throughout the New Testament we see this incredible unity with the Head, Jesus, and we, the unified body of Christ. Everything in New Testament attests to the fact that we are not alone, isolated, or separate, but rather connected to each other in a powerful and mystical way. But that is not the lesson the world would teach to us.</p> <p>The world says that science is the ultimate truth. It says that we are made of material stuff and we work in mechanistic ways. The world says if</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ST (4)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 minute</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">ST LT (2)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6 minutes</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">LT (3)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7 minutes</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">ST (4)</p>	

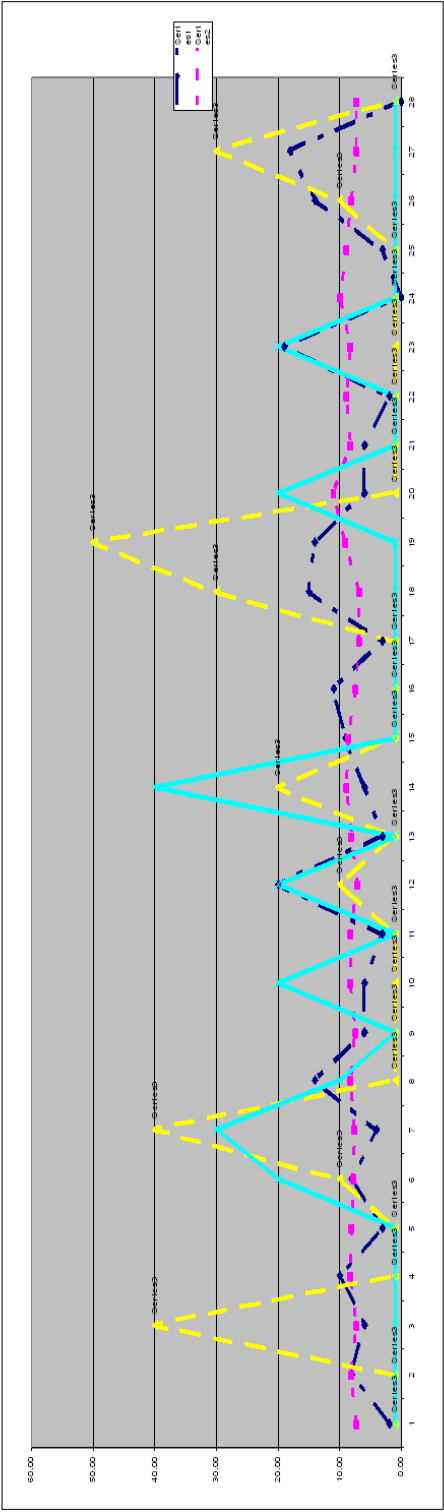
<p>you can't see it – it's not real. The world says we are individuals and therefore separate and alone. Science tells us that we are hard wired to compete. And here is where we get into all kinds of problems!</p>	LT	
<p>Because when we are separate, the only way I can be significant is at the expense of someone else. There are winners in this world and there are losers. There are the 1%'ers and the 99%'ers. We are wired to compete, which creates separation and isolation and loneliness. Yet doctors tell us loneliness can raise your blood pressure, make you sick, lead to sleepless nights, and even make your life shorter.</p>		8 minutes
<p>Except Jesus says, you are not alone. John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. 20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. Don't you think that's more than flowery words but rather God is telling us we are profoundly connected to Him and to each other?</p>	LT (2)	9 minutes
<p>So are we hard wired to compete and dominate? Or are we created by God, for His pleasure, connected to cooperate to bring Him glory? Let me answer that by quoting Charles Darwin (bet you never thought you would hear me say that!). Charles Darwin said, "<i>Sympathy is the strongest instinct in human nature.</i>" "<i>Sympathy is the strongest instinct in human nature.</i>" ...and I have proof! I am going to show you a 60 second video...when the lights are dim, please begin. (Show video).</p>		10 minutes
<p>What did you experience when you saw that 60 second video? I bet I can tell you with a high degree of accuracy. Something happened in your throat...you got "choked up". Your chest began to swell just a little...right around your "heart". Tears might have begun to swell up...in just 60 seconds all of those things happened! How do I know that? Why is that a common experience? Because OUR heavenly Father created all of us that way. And now even scientists tell us when you hurt, the part of your brain that is active, will be the same part of my brain that is active – just watching a complete stranger hurt or be overjoyed. Because we are created for connections and community.</p>	ST LT (2)	11 minutes
<p>Isn't that what the Apostle Paul said? 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. We aren't created for competition or domination. We created by God, for His pleasure, connected to cooperate to bring Him glory. You aren't alone. You aren't separate. We ARE born to be our brother's keeper.</p>		12 minutes
<p>I have often read about a church in Acts and almost every time thought to myself, <i>I surely would like to be part of that church.</i> Acts 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. This beautiful body of believers didn't seem to be worried about possessions, or economics, or who had what, or really...anything. Why? Perhaps because they knew they were profoundly connected "in Christ". And there was awe, and joy, and community.</p>	ST (2) LT (4)	13 minutes
<p>Scientists tell us that the human heart creates an electromagnetic field and when I am depressed, my "field" can affect your "field". You may have</p>		14 minutes
		15 minutes
		16 minutes

<p>experienced that with some people that are just real bummers! <i>They are messing with your field!</i> And scientists really don't understand it. THEY can't understand it!</p> <p>But we can. Ephesians 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. So what does that mean to US on a daily basis?</p> <p><u>What's Wrong with the World?</u> The economy? Foreign affairs, how to extricate ourselves from war and still feel safe, health care, poverty, immigration, global warming...how do we respond when we truly embrace the great Biblical truth that we are all powerfully, mystically connected?</p> <p><u>What's Wrong with the World?</u> G.K. Chesterton was asked that question in a letter. Do you know how this author of hundreds of books and essays responded? "<i>Dear Sir, what's wrong with the world? I am.</i>" End of letter. When I don't live in accordance with my Biblical beliefs...I am the problem.</p> <p>So knowing that we are so amazingly connected, perhaps we SHOULD try and pray for our enemies. Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Maybe we should try peace...Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Perhaps because we are so connected we should do everything in our power to care for those who cannot care for themselves – because when we help them, <i>we are helping ourselves</i>. Malachi 3:5 "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against...those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me," says the LORD of hosts. Maybe we should welcome the immigrant and provide for him because we are connected. Leviticus 23:22 'When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the LORD your God.' " Because when we do, we will find blessing and community and wholeness with each other, and unity and peace with God.</p> <p>We are so incredibly connected and perhaps it is no more profoundly stated than in the very words of Jesus. Matthew 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.</p> <p>Is this not a sign for us? <i>This is my body...take it WITHIN YOU...and I will be PART of you. All of you, take from this common bread, so you too can be united. This is the gift I give you...you are never alone.</i> As Jesus said in the Gospel of John 17:22 The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity...</p> <p>Such a gift deserves a faith response...</p> <p>1 Corinthians 11:27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.</p> <p>As we prepare for the Lord's Supper, may each one of us examine ourselves, our relationship with God, and each other. (The Lord's Supper.)</p> <p><u>What's Right with the World?</u> YOU ARE! When you are truly in Christ. Turn to your neighbor and say, "We are the body of Christ." Now the</p>	<p>ST (3) LT</p> <p>ST (5)</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT (2)</p>	<p>17 minutes</p> <p>18 minutes</p> <p>19 minutes</p> <p>20 minutes</p> <p>21 minutes</p> <p>22 minutes</p> <p>23 minutes</p> <p>24 minutes</p> <p>25 minutes</p>
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<p>other way! As we go into the world, may we remember there is no such thing as a small act of kindness. One person can make a great difference. When we are in Christ.</p> <p>Let us pray.</p>	<p>ST</p>	<p>26 minutes</p>
	<p>ST (3)</p>	<p>27 minutes</p>

APPENDIX L
Sermon Effectiveness Graph
(All Four Methods of Data Collection)
Week 4: Topical Sermon

Sermon Effectiveness Graph
(All Four Methods of Data Collection)
Week 4: Topical Sermon



- Blue: Electronic Feedback (dash - dot)
- Pink: Biometric (Video) Feedback (dot)
- Yellow: Short Term Memory Survey (long dash)
- Aqua: Long Term Memory Survey (solid)

APPENDIX M
SERMON 5, 7 OCTOBER 2012

<p style="text-align: center;">Adaville Baptist Church 7 October 2012 <i>“The Story of Five Deacons”</i> Application of Lessons Learned: Narrative/Biographical</p>	Level of Connectivity	Time
<p>Today I have a riddle, or puzzle...a mystery for you – so listen carefully!</p> <p>There was once a man who ran a thriving business out of his beautiful home. By any standard, this was a man that you would consider a great success. His wife was lovely and graceful; his children handsome and well behaved. He was well known in his community; a volunteer in the soup kitchen, a fine tenor in the choir, and a faithful deacon in the church. He tithed and then gave beyond the tithe to causes he truly believed in. He prayed for his own failures, and then prayed for his children, just in case they sinned. People admired him because as far as everything they could see, he was a man above reproach.</p> <p>Well...bad things happen to good people sometimes, don't they? No one is immune. So it happened that one day there was a great fire in his home that burned it to the ground. Within one hour he lost not only his home, but his business! Gone!</p> <p>Sadly, on top of all that, his lovely and graceful wife, wasn't so lovely when they had to move into a cramped and slightly smelly apartment. And his well behaved children, weren't so well behaved when they lost their iPhones and Nikes because he couldn't afford them anymore. In fact, they pretended they didn't know him as he sold his wares, behind a cart, on the busy corner not far from their school. There wasn't much business. Most of the time he just sat quietly, picking at a scab on his arm, wondering why in world all of this had happened to him?</p> <p>Soon, his fellow deacons from church came by to comfort him. They just didn't know what to say...but that didn't stop them. <i>“God's will I guess. Who can understand it?”</i> one of his fellow deacons mumbled. <i>“His ways are just higher than our way...who can know the mind of the Lord?”</i> he said, shrugging. None of those rapid-fire Bible verses gave him too much comfort though, especially as his son walked by, pretending he was invisible.</p> <p>A second deacon chimed in, encouraged by the first. <i>“Well, I'm NOT sure you can blame God for this. It's just a fallen world! All of creation groans!”</i> Then the two deacons began to pick at each other, forgetting our friend completely, back and forth; <i>“God's will! No, fallen world!” “God's will! No, fallen world!”</i> They were both very passionate – just not about the man who was hurting so.</p> <p>Now the third deacon just started to vibrate, he got so excited about the theological discussion, and just blurted out really loud, <i>“SIN!”</i> Everyone was shocked and just froze. <i>“Sorry”</i> the third deacon said, and just whispered this time, <i>“sin”</i>. The other deacons just stared at him. He said in his defense, <i>“You know...the Lord disciplines those He loves. Every time I sin, over and over, and over, something bad happens! You know! Right?”</i> Everybody wanted him to say more about HIS sin, but he would volunteer no more. Finally, to fill the silence, the first deacon started the cycle again; <i>“God's will! No, fallen world! “No...SIN! SIN!”</i> Our friend sat silently behind his cart, picking at the scab on his arm. <i>“Probably precancerous.”</i> he thought. They were all very zealous – just not about God or their brother.</p> <p>The fourth deacon could keep silent no longer. <i>“You're all wrong,”</i> he said. <i>“These are tests that refine us!”</i> he said proudly. Clearing his throat,</p>		<p>1 minute</p> <p>2 minutes</p> <p>3 minutes</p> <p>4 minutes</p> <p>5 minutes</p> <p>6 minutes</p>

<p><i>"I will refine them as silver and test them as gold. Zechariah 13:9...I'm tell'n ya it was the AWANA verse just last week!" "Well I don't care if it was the AWANA verse or not; God's will! No, fallen world!" "No...SIN! SIN!" "You never liked AWANA did you! To refine us!"</i></p>		
<p><i>"I can't believe you are all deacons of the church!" the fifth man, and chairmen of the deacons finally said. "The Bible clearly says that the reason this happened is because of the devil. 'Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.' It's the devil's fault, period, end of discussion." Everyone paused because after all, he was the chairmen of deacons. But they were also Baptists and so...."one man – one vote!" "God's will! No, fallen world!" "No...SIN! SIN! Just like when I, well you know...never mind" "Why don't you like AWANA? Refine us!" "I tell ya, it's the devil!" All of them were impressively passionate as they completely ignored their friend.</i></p>		7 minutes
<p>On and on they went, seemingly forgetting that on the other side of the cart was a six foot tall, open wound, 180 pound raw nerve that was deeply hurting and feeling very alone. He just sat there picking at his scab. <i>"Yep, probably precancerous."</i> And at that moment he didn't really care.</p>		8 minutes
<p>Today I have a riddle, or puzzle...a mystery for you. Of all the deacons, who was right, and who was wrong? All of them? Some of them? None of them? What do you think? Hear the word of the Lord.</p>		9 minutes
<p>Job 1:1 THERE was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. Job 2:1 AGAIN there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 The LORD said to Satan, Where have you come from? Then Satan answered the LORD and said, From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it. 3 The LORD said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause. 4 Satan answered the LORD and said, Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face. 6 So the LORD said to Satan, Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life. 7 Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. 9 Then his wife said to him, Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die! 10 But he said to her, You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity? In all this Job did not sin with his lips.</p>		10 minutes
<p>Let us pray.</p>		11 minutes
<p>Job is a book about the tribulation of man and the greatness of God. It is a profound book, mysterious and puzzling book, and honestly I believe there are some things in this book that are simply beyond our understanding.</p>		
<p>For instance, verse 3 The LORD said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity... You know my first reaction to that verse? <i>Oh Lord – don't shine that kind of light on me. Oh Lord, I don't need that kind of attention!</i> But as the staff was studying this passage on Wednesday, Connie said yes, <i>but...wouldn't it be wonderful if that was the way God felt about YOU? If He had that kind of confidence in YOU! And YOU! Consider my servant John, or my servant Brenda...blameless and upright...fearing God and turning away from evil. Holding fast to their integrity!</i></p>		13 minutes
		14 minutes

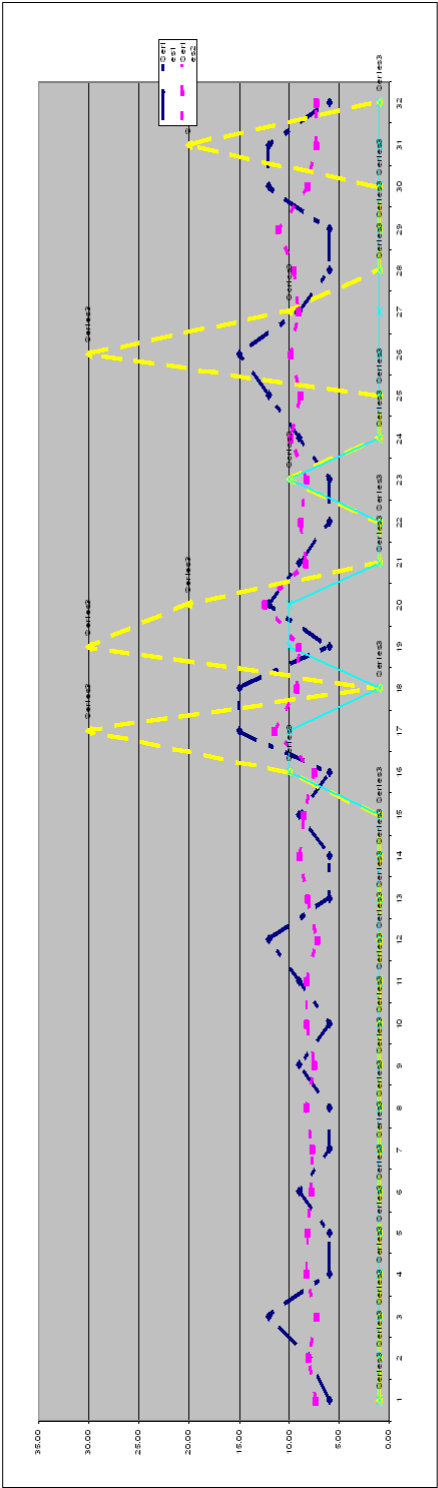
<p>You see the first thought was man centered: <i>I don't need that kind of attention!</i> But the second thought was God centered: <i>Oh Lord, do whatever it takes to make me a man of integrity, for your glory.</i> And I believe I can imagine what many are thinking – <i>oh my, now there is a terrifying prayer. I'm not sure I'm up to that big a prayer.</i></p>		15 minutes
<p>But do you know what we learn from our own experience, the Book of Job, and the very words of Jesus? We all will suffer hardship and tribulation. The very words of Jesus in the Gospel of John 16:33 “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation... Why in the world would that give us peace? Because that’s not the end of the verse or the end of the story. In the world you have tribulation...but take courage; I have overcome the world.”</p>		16 minutes
<p>So, we should not be surprised nor do we need to panic because when tribulation comes. God is sovereign and controls all things, to include limiting the hardship we will face. 1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.</p>	ST LT	
<p>So we can pray, and should pray, with confidence; <i>Oh Lord, whatever it takes, make me a man of integrity for your glory.</i> Because I know God won’t give me more than I can endure. And anything He places in my life, or allows in my life, I know it is for my good, so I might be a pure vessel of honor and worship. Because THAT was why I was created and THAT is what He deserves! And even in the storm, THAT is something to praise about.</p>	ST (3) LT	17 minutes
<p>Which deacon was correct by the way? You know the answer. All five of the deacons offered viable explanations for hardship: God’s permissive will, a fallen world, discipline because of sin to draw us back, to refine us, or the attacks of the devil. We could add from the Book of Romans; we endure hardship so we might minister to others who are going through the same hardship.</p>		18 minutes
<p>And so, we may be able determine the reason for hardship and we may not. But that doesn’t change the things we DO know: God is still sovereign! God is still good! And God is working for our good, out of His perfect love, a perfect plan that WILL make something beautiful, even out of a disaster!</p>	ST (3) LT	19 minutes
<p>Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things (the good and the bad, the joyful and the sad, the easy and the hard) causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.</p>		
<p>/// Now, I know that some of you are sitting in the ashes right now, and some are scrapping sores of hurts incredibly deep. I know that some of you have asked why, and have been angry with God, or feel surrounded by fear.</p>		20 minutes
<p>But, listen, our sovereign, all knowing, perfect loving God, is going to use the sun <i>AND</i> the rain to help you grow. He’s going to use the Birth Place, <i>AND</i> the Emergency Room to refine you. He is going to bless you at unexpected moments that will just make your heart overflow with joy. <i>AND</i> there may be other times when your heart may be broken so you have no choice but to run to Him. But what ever He uses, in His sovereign wisdom and perfect love, know that He will not leave you or forsake you, and He is working in you to transform you into the very image of His Son, Jesus. And even in the storm, that is something to praise about.</p>	ST (2)	21 minutes
<p>So perhaps the very best thing we can do, in times of famine or feast, curse or blessing is acknowledge God is sovereign and that He is working through all things to be a blessing in my life. <i>I can't see your hand in this Lord – but I'm going to trust your heart. I don't feel your presence Father, but I</i></p>		22 minutes

<p><i>know You are there. I don't know how You are going to get me through this – but I am praising you now, knowing You will. I'm afraid Holy Father, but I remember You are sovereign and no matter the circumstance, You are worthy of my praise!</i></p>		
<p>Church, we are created to praise Him, in the good times and the bad – <i>and we aren't doing our job.</i> I want to tell you the Holy Spirit woke me up Thursday morning at 5:00AM and spoke a truth into my heart that caused be to repent, and celebrate and worship for most of the morning. The beginning of the message is this; we aren't doing our job. <i>Cal, how in the world can you say we aren't doing our job? Just look at all the study and the ministry and activities we do!</i></p>	ST LT	23 minutes
<p>No church, that's not our first job. Our first job is to love Him and praise and worship Him – and I believe the Spirit wants me to say to you today, we aren't doing our job. I am convinced that my entire mind, body and spirit were created to praise Him. My hands were made to lift in praise. My tongue to sing His praises. My lips to share the Gospel of Salvation. My knees to bow down before Him. My forehead to touch the ground – <i>because who could look into the face of God and live.</i> My heart to be the Temple of the Holy Spirit. In abundance or lack, in sunshine or rain, in feast or famine, two things do not change; God is sovereign and is worthy of our praise.</p>		24 minutes
<p>And we aren't doing our job. <i>Well, I'll worship Him...as long as He blesses ME. I'll praise Him...as long as everything is going well for ME. I'll honor Him come Sunday...if there's nothing better for ME to do. I'll drop a little something in the offering plate...as long as it doesn't interfere with MY entertainment. I hope the choir sings a song I like. I hope the preacher doesn't preach too long because I need to get to dinner.</i></p>		25 minutes
<p>All of that, which is far too common in the church, is man centered rather than God centered worship. But He is not my servant – rather I am His. I am not the center of the universe – He is. And He is worthy of our praise.</p>		26 minutes
<p><i>Oh my, the preachers very excited today! Look how he sweats! What got into Him?</i> A better question is why aren't you excited? What, are we Presbyterians? Haven't you been called to be the servant of King of Kings? The One who is the Alpha and the Omega, who is in all and above all. He is my rock and my standard. He is my banner who goes before me, and protects me from all sides. He is a pillar of fire that guides me in the darkest night. He is a lamp unto my feet. He is my provision and my source. He is a consuming fire and gentle lover of my soul.</p>	ST (3)	27 minutes
<p>We aren't doing our job and He deserves better. He deserves better than looking at our watch, or passing notes, or going to the bathroom three times in a worship service. And if we can't find some excitement, some passion, some fire in here, in the <i>"hour of worship"</i>, no wonder we aren't talking to anyone about our passion and love for Jesus Christ out there. Rather the Scriptures say, Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you. The Scriptures says oh, I wish that you were cold or hot. 16 So because you are lukewarm...I will spit you out of My mouth.</p>	ST	28 Minutes
<p>Why? Because the One with the eyes of fire deserves more. He deserves more in any situation I might find myself. Our gracious and loving God is sovereign over all things to include you and me. Which means to me, we do not worship God in order to receive – we worship because He is worthy, whether we are in the middle of a storm or the middle of a rainbow. We aren't the center of all things – He is. He isn't our servant to do our bidding – we are His. Whether in seasons of abundance or curse, our God does not change and neither should our worship. Our God is sovereign. Our God deserves our praise. And so we should have the courage, confidence and faith to pray; Oh yes Lord, whatever it takes, make me a man of integrity for your glory. So God might look down from the heights of heaven and say, there he</p>		29 Minutes

<p>is...blameless and upright. There she is...fearing God and turning away from evil. There they are...holding fast to their integrity.</p> <p>Let us pray.</p> <p>Chip Ingram (the man saved at the beach): God is good...and yes, He still would be good even if I died. It's not too late.</p>		<p>30 minutes</p> <p>31 minutes</p> <p>ST (2) 32 minutes</p>
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APPENDIX N
Sermon Effectiveness Graph
(All Four Methods of Data Collection)
Week 5: Narrative/Biographical

Sermon Effectiveness Graph
(All Four Methods of Data Collection)
Week 5: Narrative/Biographical



- Blue: Electronic Feedback (dash - dot)
- Pink: Biometric (Video) Feedback (dot)
- Yellow: Short Term Memory Survey (long dash)
- Aqua: Long Term Memory Survey (solid)

APPENDIX O
A Question by Question Comparison
Across Five Sermons
And the Baseline Survey

a. I found today's sermon interesting.

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.94	0.06		
	LT Narrative Survey	0.79	0.07	0.07	0.07
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.87	0.07	0.04	0.04
	Baseline	0.55	0.31	0.05	0.09
2	ST Expository Survey	0.23	0.69	0.08	
	LT Expository Survey	0.38	0.50	0.12	
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.31	0.60	0.10	0.00
	Baseline	0.55	0.31	0.05	0.09
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.80	0.13	0.07	
	LT Biographical Survey	0.73	0.27		
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.77	0.20	0.04	0.00
	Baseline	0.55	0.31	0.05	0.09
4	ST Topical Survey	0.60	0.13	0.27	
	LT Topical Survey	0.45	0.45	0.10	
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.53	0.29	0.19	0.00
	Baseline	0.55	0.31	0.05	0.09
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	1.00			
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.83	0.17		
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.92	0.09	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.55	0.31	0.05	0.09

Sermon >>>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. A Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1

b. I found today's sermon relevant to my life.

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.94	0.06		

	LT Narrative Survey	0.79	0.07	0.07		0.07
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.87	0.07	0.04	0.00	0.04
	Baseline	0.51	0.27	0.16	0.04	0.02
2	ST Expository Survey	0.38	0.54	0.08		
	LT Expository Survey	0.5	0.38	0.12		
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.44	0.46	0.10	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.51	0.27	0.16	0.04	0.02
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.87		0.13		
	LT Biographical Survey	0.73	0.18	0.09		
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.80	0.09	0.11	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.51	0.27	0.16	0.04	0.02
4	ST Topical Survey	0.6	0.13	0.27		
	LT Topical Survey	0.7	0.2	0.1		
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.65	0.17	0.19	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.51	0.27	0.16	0.04	0.02
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.93	0.07			
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.92	0.08			
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.93	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.51	0.27	0.16	0.04	0.02

Sermon >>>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. B Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1

c. The sermon helped me to worship God.

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.63	0.31	0.06	
	LT Narrative Survey	0.7	0.23	0.07	
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.67	0.27	0.07	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.34	0.09	0.04
2	ST Expository Survey	0.62	0.38		
	LT Expository Survey	0.5	0.38	0.12	
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.56	0.38	0.06	0.00

	Baseline	0.49	0.34	0.09	0.04	0.04
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.8	0.13	0.07		
	LT Biographical Survey	0.73	0.18	0.09		
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.77	0.16	0.08	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.34	0.09	0.04	0.04
4	ST Topical Survey	0.66	0.07	0.2	0.07	
	LT Topical Survey	0.6	0.1	0.3		
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.63	0.09	0.25	0.04	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.34	0.09	0.04	0.04
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.93	0.07			
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.85	0.08	0.07		
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.89	0.08	0.04	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.34	0.09	0.04	0.04

Sermon >>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. C Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	3	5	2	3	1

d. I have a better understanding of God's expectation for my life

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.5	0.44	0.06	
	LT Narrative Survey	0.43	0.43	0.07	0.07
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.47	0.44	0.07	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.33	0.07	0.07
2	ST Expository Survey	0.4	0.23	0.37	
	LT Expository Survey	0	0.5	0.38	0.12
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.20	0.37	0.38	0.06
	Baseline	0.49	0.33	0.07	0.07
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.53	0.4	0.07	
	LT Biographical Survey	0.45	0.37	0.18	
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.49	0.39	0.13	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.33	0.07	0.07
4	ST Topical Survey	0.46	0.27	0.27	
	LT Topical Survey	0.4	0.2	0.4	

Total ST/LT Topical	0.43	0.24	0.34	0.00	0.00
Baseline	0.49	0.33	0.07	0.07	0.04

5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.79	0.14		0.07	
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.75	0.17	0.08		
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.77	0.16	0.04	0.04	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.33	0.07	0.07	0.04

Sermon >>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. D Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	3	5	2	4	1

e. This sermon will contribute to me being more like Jesus

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.5	0.5		
	LT Narrative Survey	0.66	0.27		0.07
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.58	0.39	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.29	0.11	0.09
2	ST Expository Survey	0.08	0.46	0.46	
	LT Expository Survey	0.12	0.5	0.38	
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.10	0.48	0.42	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.29	0.11	0.09
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.53	0.47		
	LT Biographical Survey	0.45	0.37	0.18	
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.49	0.42	0.09	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.29	0.11	0.09
4	ST Topical Survey	0.6	0.13	0.27	
	LT Topical Survey	0.2	0.7	0.1	
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.40	0.42	0.19	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.29	0.11	0.09
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.79	0.21		
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.83	0.17		
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.81	0.19	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.49	0.29	0.11	0.09

Sermon >>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
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Quest. E Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1
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f. I rarely drifted off during the sermon.

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.69	0.25		0.06
	LT Narrative Survey	0.71	0.22		0.07
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.70	0.24	0.00	0.03
	Baseline	0.38	0.29	0.22	0.09
2	ST Expository Survey	0.3	0.23	0.31	0.08
	LT Expository Survey	0.4	0.35	0.12	0.13
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.35	0.29	0.22	0.04
	Baseline	0.38	0.29	0.22	0.09
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.47	0.33	0.2	
	LT Biographical Survey	0.63	0.37		
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.55	0.35	0.10	0.00
	Baseline	0.38	0.29	0.22	0.09
4	ST Topical Survey	0.6	0.13	0.2	0.07
	LT Topical Survey	0.7	0.3		
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.65	0.22	0.10	0.04
	Baseline	0.38	0.29	0.22	0.09
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.93			0.07
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.59	0.17	0.07	0.17
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.76	0.09	0.04	0.04
	Baseline	0.38	0.29	0.22	0.09

Sermon >>>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. F Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1

g. My attitudes or actions toward others will likely change

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.63	0.31	0.06	
	LT Narrative Survey	0.36	0.36	0.21	0.07
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.50	0.34	0.14	0.00
	Baseline	0.36	0.38	0.15	0.07

2	ST Expository Survey	0.15	0.54	0.23	0.08	
	LT Expository Survey		0.38	0.5	0.12	
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.15	0.46	0.37	0.10	0.00
	Baseline	0.36	0.38	0.15	0.07	0.04
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.53	0.4	0.07		
	LT Biographical Survey	0.36	0.18	0.37	0.09	
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.45	0.29	0.22	0.05	0.00
	Baseline	0.36	0.38	0.15	0.07	0.04
4	ST Topical Survey	0.53	0.27	0.13	0.07	
	LT Topical Survey	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.1	
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.52	0.24	0.17	0.09	0.00
	Baseline	0.36	0.38	0.15	0.07	0.04
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.72	0.21		0.07	
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.43	0.5	0.07		
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.58	0.36	0.04	0.04	0.00
	Baseline	0.36	0.38	0.15	0.07	0.04

Sermon >>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. G Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	3	5	4	2	1

h. There were one or more points in the sermon that I will likely share

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.25	0.69	0.06		
	LT Narrative Survey	0.43	0.43	0.07	0.07	
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.34	0.56	0.07	0.04	0.00
	Baseline	0.22	0.45	0.16	0.17	
2	ST Expository Survey	0.15	0.54	0.23	0.08	
	LT Expository Survey	0.12		0.5	0.25	0.13
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.14	0.27	0.37	0.17	0.07
	Baseline	0.22	0.45	0.16	0.17	
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.53	0.4	0.07		
	LT Biographical Survey	0.18	0.19	0.45	0.09	0.09
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.36	0.30	0.26	0.05	0.05

	Baseline	0.22	0.45	0.16	0.17	
4	ST Topical Survey	0.47	0.46		0.07	
	LT Topical Survey	0.2	0.1	0.5		0.2
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.34	0.28	0.25	0.04	0.10
	Baseline	0.22	0.45	0.16	0.17	
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.79	0.21			
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.33	0.33	0.27	0.07	
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.56	0.27	0.14	0.04	0.00
	Baseline	0.22	0.45	0.16	0.17	

Sermon >>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. H Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1

i. I was rarely distracted by the preacher's mannerisms

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.69	0.31		
	LT Narrative Survey	0.64	0.29		0.07
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.67	0.30	0.00	0.04
	Baseline	0.58	0.29	0.05	0.04
2	ST Expository Survey	0.62	0.23	0.15	
	LT Expository Survey	0.62	0.38		
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.62	0.31	0.08	0.00
	Baseline	0.58	0.29	0.05	0.04
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.63	0.3	0.07	
	LT Biographical Survey	0.82	0.09	0.09	
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.73	0.20	0.16	0.00
	Baseline	0.58	0.29	0.05	0.04
4	ST Topical Survey	0.66	0.27		0.07
	LT Topical Survey	0.85	0.15		
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.76	0.21	0.00	0.04
	Baseline	0.58	0.29	0.05	0.04
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.72	0.21	0.07	
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.67	0.33		

Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.70	0.27	0.04	0.00	0.00
Baseline	0.58	0.29	0.05	0.04	0.04

Sermon >>>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. I Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	4	5	2	1	3

j. I found the integration of music with the theme of the sermon helpful

(Question not included – not a constant between all sermons)

k. Visuals helped me to understand the theme

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.38	0.31	0.25	0.06
	LT Narrative Survey	0.71	0.07	0.15	
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.55	0.19	0.4	0.03
	Baseline	0.64	0.18	0.04	0.07
2	ST Expository Survey	0.54	0.23	0.23	
	LT Expository Survey	0.38	0.38	0.12	0.12
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.46	0.305	0.175	0.06
	Baseline	0.64	0.18	0.04	0.07
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.4	0.4	0.2	
	LT Biographical Survey	0.37	0.18	0.45	
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.39	0.29	0.65	0
	Baseline	0.64	0.18	0.04	0.07
4	ST Topical Survey	0.61	0.13	0.13	0.13
	LT Topical Survey	0.4	0.4	0.1	
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.51	0.265	0.115	0.065
	Baseline	0.64	0.18	0.04	0.07
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.44	0.35	0.21	
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.43	0.5	0.07	
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.44	0.43	0.14	0
	Baseline	0.64	0.18	0.04	0.07

Sermon >>>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. K Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	1	3	4	2	5

l. I felt connected to the congregation and the preacher...*(Question not included – not a constant between all sermons:**Topical Sermon was specifically with regard to the “Body of Christ” and our connectedness to each other)***m. Different delivery methods help me to stay connected**

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.56	0.31	0.13		
	LT Narrative Survey	0.56	0.29	0.15		
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.56	0.30	0.28	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.62	0.13	0.16	0.05	0.04
2	ST Expository Survey	0.38	0.31	0.31		
	LT Expository Survey	0.25	0.63	0.12		
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.32	0.47	0.22	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.62	0.13	0.16	0.05	0.04
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.73	0.27			
	LT Biographical Survey	0.82		0.18		
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.78	0.14	0.18	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.62	0.13	0.16	0.05	0.04
4	ST Topical Survey	0.37	0.56		0.07	
	LT Topical Survey	0.45	0.2	0.35		
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.41	0.38	0.18	0.04	0.00
	Baseline	0.62	0.13	0.16	0.05	0.04
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.79	0.14	0.07		
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.33	0.55	0.12		
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.56	0.35	0.10	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.62	0.13	0.16	0.05	0.04

Sermon >>>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. M Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2.5	5	1	4	2.5

n. I am very comfortable with where I am in my spiritual life at this time.*(Question not included – not applicable at this point of the study)***o. I am at a point in my life when I am really seeking God.**

(Question not included – not applicable at this point of the study)

p. I am at a point in my life when I am experiencing significant heartache...

(Question not included – not applicable at this point of the study)

q. I connected to this message because it touched my heart

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.5	0.25	0.25	
	LT Narrative Survey	0.65	0.21	0.07	0.07
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.58	0.23	0.32	0.00
	Baseline	0.34	0.44	0.09	0.04
2	ST Expository Survey	0.23	0.54	0.08	0.15
	LT Expository Survey	0.25	0.5	0.25	
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.24	0.52	0.17	0.08
	Baseline	0.34	0.44	0.09	0.04
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.4	0.4	0.2	
	LT Biographical Survey	0.18	0.37	0.45	
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.29	0.39	0.65	0.00
	Baseline	0.34	0.44	0.09	0.04
4	ST Topical Survey	0.27	0.33	0.33	0.07
	LT Topical Survey	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.24	0.27	0.42	0.09
	Baseline	0.34	0.44	0.09	0.04
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.79	0.07	0.14	
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.6	0.33	0.07	
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.70	0.20	0.11	0.00
	Baseline	0.34	0.44	0.09	0.04

Sermon >>>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. Q Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	4.5	3	4.5	1

r. I connected to this sermon because it challenged me to think

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.62	0.32	0.06	

	LT Narrative Survey	0.5	0.28	0.15		0.07
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.56	0.30	0.21	0.00	0.07
	Baseline	0.42	0.38	0.05	0.11	0.04
2	ST Expository Survey	0.38	0.38	0.16	0.08	
	LT Expository Survey		0.25	0.5	0.25	
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.19	0.32	0.33	0.17	0.00
	Baseline	0.42	0.38	0.05	0.11	0.04
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.6	0.33	0.07		
	LT Biographical Survey	0.45	0.37	0.18		
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.53	0.35	0.25	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.42	0.38	0.05	0.11	0.04
4	ST Topical Survey	0.46	0.27	0.2	0.07	
	LT Topical Survey	0.3		0.7		
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.38	0.14	0.45	0.04	0.00
	Baseline	0.42	0.38	0.05	0.11	0.04
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.86	0.14			
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.6	0.4			
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.73	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.42	0.38	0.05	0.11	0.04

Sermon >>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. R Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1

s. I found this sermon interesting because it called me to action

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.38	0.31	0.31	
	LT Narrative Survey	0.28	0.5	0.15	0.07
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.33	0.41	0.46	0.00
	Baseline	0.37	0.37	0.16	0.06
2	ST Expository Survey	0.08	0.62	0.08	0.22
	LT Expository Survey		0.25	0.38	0.37
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.04	0.44	0.23	0.30
	Baseline	0.37	0.37	0.16	0.06

3	ST Biographical Survey	0.53	0.4	0.07		
	LT Biographical Survey	0.45		0.46	0.09	
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.49	0.20	0.53	0.05	0.00
	Baseline	0.37	0.37	0.16	0.06	0.04
4	ST Topical Survey	0.27	0.47	0.13	0.13	
	LT Topical Survey	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.1	
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.19	0.34	0.37	0.12	0.00
	Baseline	0.37	0.37	0.16	0.06	0.04
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.86	0.07	0.07		
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.76	0.17	0.07		
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.81	0.12	0.07	0.00	0.00
	Baseline	0.37	0.37	0.16	0.06	0.04

Sermon >>>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. S Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	3	5	2	4	1

t. I found this sermon interesting because it made me laugh.

(Question not included – not a constant between all sermons)

u. I connected to this sermon because it brought back a memory from...

Week		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.31	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.12
	LT Narrative Survey	0.14	0.5	0.14		0.22
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.23	0.35	0.33	0.10	0.34
	Baseline	0.16	0.26	0.44	0.09	0.05
2	ST Expository Survey	0.31	0.31	0.23	0.15	
	LT Expository Survey	0.13	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.12
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.22	0.28	0.24	0.20	0.06
	Baseline	0.16	0.26	0.44	0.09	0.05
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.13	0.4	0.3	0.07	0.1
	LT Biographical Survey	0.37	0.18	0.27	0.18	
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.25	0.29	0.57	0.13	0.05
	Baseline	0.16	0.26	0.44	0.09	0.05
4	ST Topical Survey	0.2	0.27	0.13	0.27	0.13

LT Topical Survey	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3
Total ST/LT Topical	0.20	0.24	0.17	0.19	0.22
Baseline	0.16	0.26	0.44	0.09	0.05

5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.21	0.21	0.44		0.14
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.08	0.07	0.61	0.17	0.07
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.15	0.14	0.53	0.09	0.11
	Baseline	0.16	0.26	0.44	0.09	0.05

Sermon >>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. U Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	3	1	4	5

v. I may not have ‘liked’ the sermon but it was an important word for my life

Week		Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
1	ST Narrative Survey	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.06	0.19
	LT Narrative Survey	0.44	0.21	0.07	0.07	0.21
	Total ST/LT Narrative	0.35	0.23	0.16	0.07	0.20
	Baseline	0.4	0.31	0.18	0.09	0.02
2	ST Expository Survey	0.31	0.31	0.31		0.07
	LT Expository Survey	0.24	0.13	0.5	0.13	
	Total ST/LT Expository	0.28	0.22	0.41	0.07	0.04
	Baseline	0.4	0.31	0.18	0.09	0.02
3	ST Biographical Survey	0.33	0.34	0.13	0.13	0.07
	LT Biographical Survey	0.55	0.18		0.09	0.18
	Total ST/LT Biographical	0.44	0.26	0.07	0.11	0.13
	Baseline	0.4	0.31	0.18	0.09	0.02
4	ST Topical Survey	0.27	0.13	0.13	0.4	0.07
	LT Topical Survey	0.2	0.5	0.3		
	Total ST/LT Topical	0.24	0.32	0.22	0.20	0.04
	Baseline	0.4	0.31	0.18	0.09	0.02
5	ST Narrative/Biographical	0.65		0.21	0.14	
	LT Narrative/Biographical	0.59	0.17	0.17	0.07	
	Total ST/LT Nar/Bio	0.62	0.09	0.19	0.11	0.00
	Baseline	0.4	0.31	0.18	0.09	0.02

Sermon >>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. V Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	3	4	2	5	1

APPENDIX P
A Positional Comparison of all Questions by Week
(Less is Better)

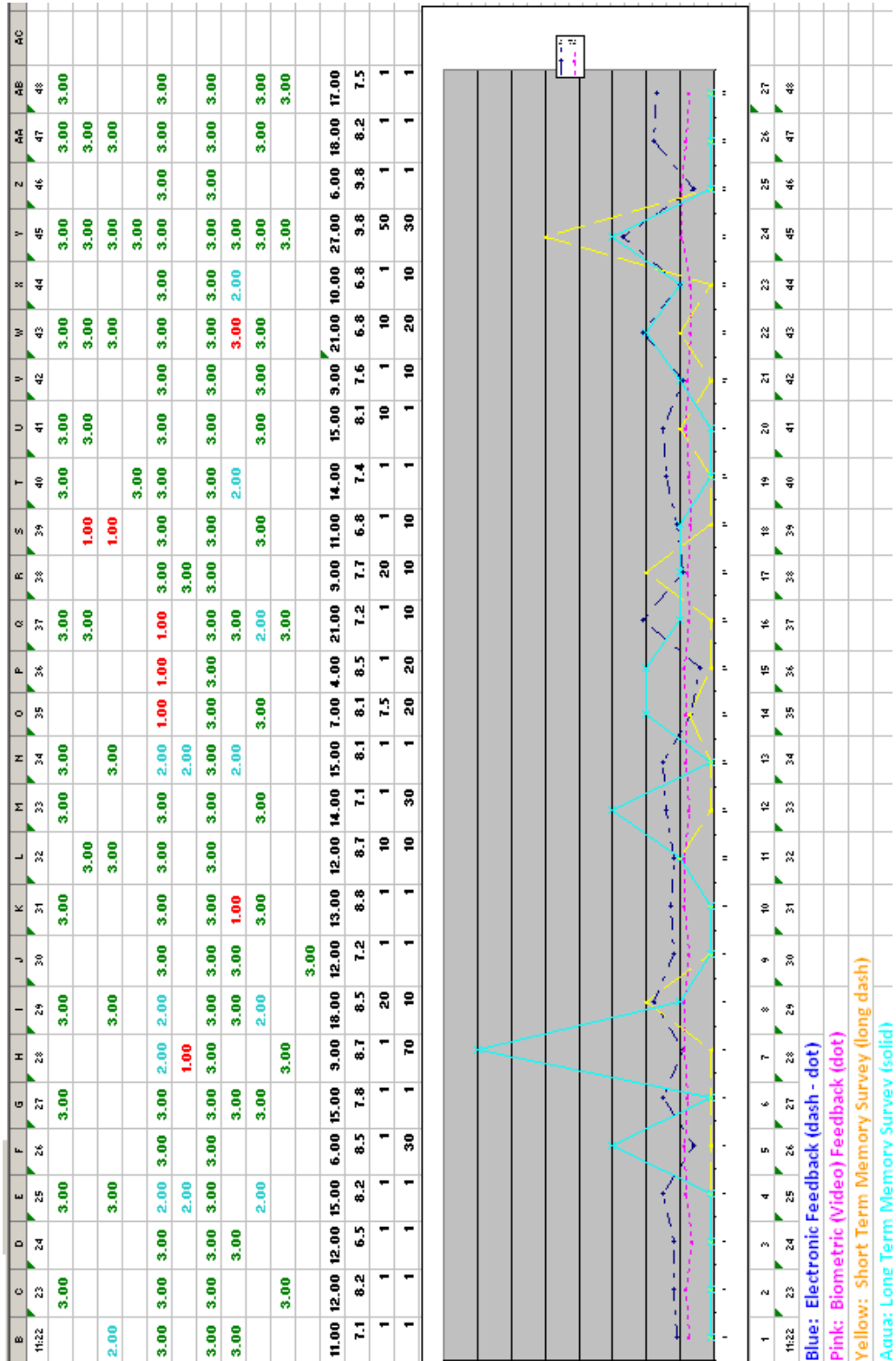
Sermon >>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. A Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1
Quest. B Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1
Quest. C Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	3	5	2	3	1
Quest. D Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	3	5	2	4	1
Quest. E Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1
Quest. F Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1
Quest. G Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	3	5	4	2	1
Quest. H Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1
Quest. I Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	4	5	2	1	3
Quest. K Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	1	3	4	2	5
Quest. M Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2.5	5	1	4	2.5
Quest. Q Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	4.5	3	4.5	1
Quest. R Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	5	3	4	1
Quest. S Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	3	5	2	4	1
Quest. U Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	2	3	1	4	5
Quest. V Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	3	4	2	5	1
Total (<u>LESS</u> is better)	38.5	74.5	41	57.5	27.5
	2	5	3	4	1

APPENDIX Q
A Percentage Comparison of all Questions by Week
(More is Better)

Sermon >>>	Narr	Expos	Bio	Top	Nar/Bio
Quest. A Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.87	0.31	0.77	0.53	0.92
Quest. B Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.87	0.44	0.80	0.65	0.93
Quest. C Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.67	0.56	0.77	0.63	0.88
Quest. D Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.47	0.2	0.49	0.43	0.77
Quest. E Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.58	0.1	0.49	0.4	0.81
Quest. F Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.7	0.35	0.63	0.65	0.76
Quest. G Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.5	0.15	0.45	0.52	0.58
Quest. H Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.34	0.14	0.36	0.34	0.56
Quest. I Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.67	0.62	0.73	0.76	0.7
Quest. K Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.55	0.46	0.39	0.51	0.44
Quest. M Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.56	0.32	0.78	0.41	0.56
Quest. Q Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.58	0.24	0.29	0.24	0.7
Quest. R Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.56	0.19	0.53	0.38	0.73
Quest. S Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.33	0.04	0.49	0.19	0.81
Quest. U Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.23	0.22	0.25	0.2	0.15
Quest. V Rating 1-5 (1 is best)	0.35	0.28	0.44	0.24	0.62
Total (<u>MORE</u> is better)	8.83	4.62	8.66	7.08	10.92
	2	5	3	4	1

APPENDIX R

Example of a Graph with Annotated Numeric Values



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