

BIBLICAL PREACHING

Harding School of Theology
HOML 5830 Biblical Preaching
Spring 2024
Thursdays 1:00–3:45pm
Location: TBD/Zoom

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I. Course Information

A. Course Description

From the academic catalogue: Studies biblical preaching to help a contemporary congregation develop a solid Christian identity. Issues of interpretation that lead to responsible homiletical practice are explored. Exercises and paradigms for preaching from a variety of biblical texts are given.

From the professor: This course offers an introduction to preaching which attends to matters specific to biblical preaching, in particular the interpretation and exposition of texts, and the development and delivery of sermons. Because this is the only course in preaching many students will take at a graduate level, the course's scope is intentionally broad. Therefore, attention is given to matters beyond the practice of preaching, such as theology of preaching, exemplars of exceptional preaching, and the preacher's life and character. Preaching is an integrative task, and other graduate courses (such as those in backgrounds, interpretation, theology, and ministry) all come together for the sermon. This course is designed to complement and synthesize other coursework, and, therefore, it is recommended by the professor (although not required) that this course be taken toward the end of one's coursework.

B. Course Goals

Through this course, it is hoped that students will apprehend (1) the skills necessary to preach biblical sermons, (2) a richer understanding of the place of preaching in Scripture and church history, (3) a deeper appreciation for the place of preaching in the church and academy today, (4) a greater personal desire to preach, and (5) a clearer understanding of the importance of the preacher's character.

In order to achieve these goals, students will be required to (1) preach, at least two times this semester, (2) read significant books and articles on preaching, (3) reflect meaningfully on preaching in class discussions, in papers, and on exams, (4) and listen to selected sermons modeling exemplary preaching.

C. Course Disclaimer & Invitation

No matter how experienced a preacher may be, the task of preaching is challenging for everyone. All of us (including your professor) are still learning. I will do all I can to maintain a classroom space that is safe and supportive, in which we all can grow. I hope we will see our gatherings as a sort of "workshop" space in which we strive to help one another be the best preachers each of us can be. The aim of this class is not merely to affirm one another as already-competent preachers, but to foster true growth. Therefore, it is necessary that each of us carries into the classroom an eagerness to engage, an openness to grow, and virtues such as honesty, humility, and graciousness.

D. Course Readings

Textbooks can now be ordered through a link on the *HST website*. The Textbooks tab can be viewed on the navigation bar on any page of the website. Check the book list provided under the Textbooks tab (<https://hst.edu/student-resources/textbook-services/spring-2024-bookstore/>) for correct ISBN's and editions to insure correct ordering. A link provided there will take you to Amazon where you will only need to enter the ISBN to order your books.

The following readings have been carefully and prayerfully selected in order to achieve the goals listed above. It is essential that each of these readings be read prior to the day it is assigned, and that each reading be brought to class that day. At the back of this syllabus is a concise bibliography that students might find helpful, and that might help fill some of the gaps left by the required readings.

i. Required Textbooks

Jared E. Alcántara, *Learning from a Legend: What Gardner C. Taylor Can Teach Us about Preaching* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016). ISBN 978-1498226097

Sally A. Brown & Luke A. Powery, *Ways of the Word: Learning to Preach for Your Time and Place* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016). ISBN 978-0800699222

Mary S. Hulst, *A Little Handbook for Preachers: Ten Practical Ways to a Better Sermon by Sunday* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016). ISBN 978-0830841288

William H. Willimon, *Preachers Dare: Speaking for God* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2020). ISBN 978-1791008055

Choose one of three:

Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Penguin, 2016). ISBN 978-0143108719

Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Fortress Resources for Preaching) (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996). ISBN 978-0800627737

Frank A. Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 2013). ISBN 978-0829819786

ii. Required Articles & Essays (available on Canvas)

Fred B. Craddock, "The Life of Study," in *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2010), 67–83.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, "What's the Matter with Preaching?" *Harpers Magazine* 157 (July 1928): 133–42.

Pope Francis, "The Proclamation of the Gospel," in *The Joy of the Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013).

Trygve D. Johnson, "Preaching in Context," in *What is Jesus Doing? God's Activity in the Life and Work of the Church*, ed. Edwin Chr. van Driel (Minneapolis: InterVarsity, 2020), 293–318.

Keith Willhite, "A Bullet Versus Buckshot: What Makes the Big Idea Work," in *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People*, eds. Keith Willhite & Scott M. Gibson, 13–23 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998).

E. Grading Scale

A	100–90	1000–900 points	4.0	Excellent
B	89–80	899–800 points	3.0	Good
C	79–70	799–700 points	2.0	Fair
D	69–60	699–600 points	1.0	Poor
F	59–0	599–0 points	0.0	Failing

F. Style

Unless explicitly stated otherwise by me in class or in the assignment description, all written assignments should be typed in size 12 Times New Roman font and double-spaced. The student's name should be at the top of the first page. Pages should be numbered.

G. Late Work

Late work will be penalized 10 points per day it is late, up to 4 weekdays. After 4 weekdays, you can submit it for half credit. As your professor, I reserve the right to refuse late work or to accept late work without penalty, depending on the circumstances. If there is an emergency, please communicate with me as soon as possible. Any late work must be submitted by the beginning of the final exam.

H. Graded Assignments

i. Class Participation (100 points)

These points will be earned by regular promptness and attendance, evidence of preparedness for each class, attentive and active listening, thoughtful and earnest engagement in discussions, and generosity and respect toward others.

Sermon feedback forms based off the preaching of your classmates are also part of this grade. These forms will be completed by all for each sermon and uploaded into a shared folder on Canvas.

ii. Reflection Papers (100 points total; two papers, 50 points each)

Reflections should be two pages, double-spaced.

Reflections ought to be submitted on Canvas prior to the beginning of class the days they are assigned. You should be prepared to discuss your paper on those class days.

a. Reflection One: Due January 18

Reflect on the following questions: (1) What thoughts and feelings, positive or negative, come to mind and heart when you think about “preaching”? (2) What has been your experience with preaching (both as one who has preached, or one who has heard preaching) prior to this class? (3) Who, if anyone, has demonstrated good preaching to you (either people you have heard in-person or well-known preachers you have heard on podcasts or elsewhere)? (4) How are you hoping to benefit from taking this class?

b. Reflection Two: Due March 14

Reflect on the following questions: (1) What are some key learnings you have had in the first half of this course? (2) What parts of the course or the material have you had a hard time with? (3) What are you hopeful that we cover in the second half of this course?

iii. Book Reviews (300 points total; three reviews, 100 points each)

Reviews should be four pages, double-spaced.

Each review should discuss the following items: (1) Summary of the book: answer the questions (a) what is the primary thesis of the book? and (b) what are the main arguments or points the author makes or puts forward? (2) Critical engagement with the strengths and weaknesses of the book: answer the questions (a) what does the author accomplish or fail to accomplish, and why? and (b) which arguments or points are most persuasive and which are problematic or need buttressing? (3) Personal reflections on the book: answer the question what in the book did you find especially helpful or meaningful to you personally? (4) Questions and curiosities: answer the questions (a) did the book leave you with any questions? and (b) did any part of the book push you to go explore additional matters?

a. Book Review One: William H. Willimon, *Preachers Dare*, Due January 25

b. Book Review Two: Keller/Tisdale/Thomas, Due March 21

c. Book Review Three: Jared E. Alcántara, *Learning from a Legend*, Due April 18

iv. Sermons (300 points; two sermons, 150 points each)

Prepare and preach two sermons this semester, one sermon from an Old Testament text in the first half of the semester, one sermon from a New Testament text in the second half of the semester. Only one of the two sermons should be from a narrative text. Rather than recycling old sermons, prepare new sermons. Here are texts from which you can choose:

a. Old Testament Texts: (1) Genesis 4:1–16; (2) Genesis 11:1–9; (3) Genesis 16:1–16; (4) Genesis 32:22–32; (5) Deuteronomy 6:1–9; (6) Deuteronomy 8:1–20; (7) Joshua 1:1–9; (8) Joshua 7:10–26; (9) Psalm 8; (10) Psalm 24; (11) Psalm 50; (12) Psalm 63; (13) Psalm 91; (14) Psalm 95; (15) Proverbs 1:20–33; (16) Proverbs 3:1–12.

b. New Testament Texts: (1) Matthew 4:1–11; (2) Matthew 11:1–19; (3) Matthew 12:1–14; (4) Matthew 14:13–21; (5) Ephesians 1:3–14; (6) Ephesians 2:1–10; (7) Ephesians 3:14–21; (8) Ephesians 4:1–16; (9) James 2:1–13; (10) James 2:14–26; (11) James 4:1–12; (12) James 5:7–12; (13) 1 John 1:5–10; (14) 1 John 2:15–17; (15) 1 John 3:1–3; (16) 1 John 4:7–21.

Sermon grades consists of two parts: (i.) Sermon Materials and Presentation, 75 points; (ii.) Preaching and Manuscript, 75 points.

a. Sermon Materials and Presentation (75 points)

In preparation for each of the sermons, you will compile materials based on your passage from which you will preach. You will also give a presentation on these materials a few weeks before preaching.

The grade for this assignment will be based off the following work:

(a) Exegetical notes on the text.

This is not a typical research paper, but rather more of a collection of notes or journal entries, bits and pieces of information, quotations, etc. These notes can come from commentaries, articles, lexicons, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and any other source that digs into your passage. The majority of the material included should be of substance and from quality sources.

You should have entries from 8–12 different sources. Each entry must have with it the following: (1) Bibliographic Citation. (2) Substantive quotation or summary of material pertinent to your sermon. (3) Brief, personal annotation concerning how this material connects with your passage and might work well in your sermon.

See Appendix B for an example entry.

(b) Manuscript Brief

This is a one-page document that includes the following information: (1) preacher; (2) text; (3) title of sermon; (4) subject question; (5) complement answer; (6) exegetical idea; (7) homiletical idea; (8) purpose; and (9) concise outline.

See Appendix C for an example entry.

(c) Presentation

Give a twenty-minute presentation covering parts (a) and (b) above. In your presentation be sure to (1) read your passage with us; (2) make commentary on your passage from your exegetical notes concerning details such as the genre, literary context, translation issues, and a general explanation of the verses and the overall passage; and (3) walk us through your manuscript brief explaining your homiletical decisions.

A simple, brief PowerPoint presentation is encouraged.

Following the twenty-minute presentation, be prepared to engage the class in a critical conversation about your presentation.

b. Preaching and Manuscript (75 points)

The second half of the grade is based off the following work:

(a) Preaching

Sermons will be graded by the following criteria: (1) Biblical Content: Is the sermon true? Is the sermon biblical? Are the ideas presented faithful to the text? (2) Applicational Content: Does the sermon have anything to say to the present day? Is there a takeaway for listeners? (3) Preparedness & Delivery: Is the

sermon organized and clear? Does the sermon reflect thoughtfulness? Is it evident that it has been practiced? Does the preacher make eye contact with listeners, speak clearly, use the body effectively, etc.? (4) Personalness. Is it clear the message is meaningful to the speaker? Do the words come from the heart? (5) Length. Sermons should be 13–15 minutes long. Grades will be impacted if sermons are significantly shorter or longer.

(b) Manuscript

A manuscript is a written copy of your sermon which reflects the complete sermon. The form of the manuscript is up to you.

Your manuscript should reflect suggestions made in class during your presentation or after by the instructor, as well as any changes you made to strengthen the sermon.

Due the day you preach.

There are examples of manuscripts in Appendices D, E, and F.

v. Exams (200 points total; two exams, 100 points each)

You will take two exams in this class. The exams will be short response and essay. More details about the exams may be given in the weeks prior to each exam.

a. Midterm Exam, February 22 (100 points)

Focuses on first half of semester, especially Brown and Powery’s *Ways of the Word*.

b. Final Exam, May 2 (100 points)

Focuses on cumulative learnings from the entire semester, and Hulst’s *Little Handbook for Preachers*.

I. Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
January 11:	Biblical Preaching	—	—
January 18:	Central Idea of the Sermon	Willhite	Reflection Paper One
January 25:	Theology of Preaching	Willimon	Willimon Review
February 1:	Sermon Presentations	Craddock	Sermon Materials & Presentation
February 8:	Sermon Forms	—	—
February 15:	Sermons	—	Preaching & Manuscript
February 22:	Midterm	Brown & Powery	Midterm
February 29:	No Class (Intensive Week)	—	—
March 7:	No Class (Spring Break)	—	—
March 14:	Review	Johnson	Reflection Paper Two

March 21:	Various Concerns	Keller/Tisdale/Thomas	Keller/Tisdale/Thomas Review
March 28:	Preaching Genres	Fosdick	—
April 4:	Delivery	Francis	Sermon Materials & Presentation
April 11:	No Class (Homecoming)	—	—
April 18:	Preaching & Character	Alcántara	Alcántara Review
April 25:	Sermons	—	Preaching & Manuscript
May 2:	Final Exam	Hulst	Final & All late work due

II. Professor Information

A. Biography

I grew up in Southeastern Ohio in a family that worshipped in Churches of Christ. I came to Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas in 2007 and graduated with a degree in Bible in 2012. I began working as the youth minister for the Beebe Church of Christ in 2010 while I was still a student. In 2015 I transitioned into the preaching role at the same church. I earned a Master's of Divinity at Harding School of Theology from 2012 to 2019. I began work on a PhD in Preaching at Baylor University in 2019 and completed my coursework Summer 2022. I am currently working on my dissertation. I met my wife, Madison, at Harding. We have three children: a daughter, Shiloh, and two sons, August and Eliot. I like to run and to read.

B. Communication

If at any point in the semester you have any questions, concerns, or want to visit, please, reach out to me through the contact information provided at the top of this syllabus.

You are welcome to friend me on Facebook. My name there is Matthew Love. You can also text me on my cell phone if you need anything. However, please conduct any official communication and business about the class through Canvas email.

III. University Policies

A. Accessibility

HST professors are accessible to local and distance students. Please use the contact information at the top of this syllabus to arrange appointments with me (in person, by Zoom, or by phone).

B. Credit Hour Workload

For every course credit hour, the typical student should expect to spend at least three clock hours per week of concentrated attention on course-related work, including but not limited to time attending class, as well as out-of-class time spent reading, reviewing, organizing notes, preparing for upcoming quizzes/exams, problem solving, developing and completing projects, and other activities that enhance learning. Thus, for a three-hour course, a typical student should expect to spend at least nine hours per week dedicated to the course.

C. Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact Steve McLeod, the Associate Dean, at 901-761-1353.

D. Library Resources

If you have not taken 5990 (Advanced Theological Research) or took it more than a year ago, go to the HST Web site (www.hst.edu) for information concerning library services to students. Under the “library” tab you will find a link to and instructions for searching the HST online catalog. There are also instructions for using the following databases available through the library: OCLC FirstSearch, EBSCOhost, Infotrac, and Religious and Theological Abstracts. Contact the library for passwords to these databases. Also available are the research guides distributed in 5990. These annotated bibliographies list basic tools you will find helpful in your research.

E. Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty in all its forms is inconsistent with Christian faith and practice, and will result in penalties which could include a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, dismissal from the course, and even dismissal from the school.

F. Canvas On-line Learning System

In addition to the live video platform Zoom.us (see below), this course uses Harding’s Canvas Online Learning System, which is accessed at <http://elearning.harding.edu>. If you have problems gaining access to Canvas, contact HU technical support (501) 279-4545. You will need your HST username and your password to log into Harding Pipeline. These are the same credentials you use to register for classes via Pipeline.

When you need to contact your professor via email about a class related issue, always use the email system contained in the Canvas learning management system. This provides a secure convenient means of tracking communication between you and your professor.

Harding University gives each student an email address that also utilizes your username. Many students use other email addresses as their preferred address. You can set your Harding Gmail account to forward messages to an alternative email address if you want; however, it is your responsibility to check your Harding email account regularly because this is the official Harding email address to which all Harding-related email will be sent.

G. HST LIVE Interactive Video Education (HST LIVE) via Zoom

In addition to Canvas (see above), this HST-Live course is supported with the video platform Zoom.us. For new Zoom platform users, go to <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697-Getting-Started> for helpful video tutorials about using this platform.

The HST Live/Zoom Meeting ID for this course will be posted at the top of the home page on Canvas.

Students new to HST LIVE should watch the HST LIVE orientation video before the first day of class. The video can be found at <https://hst.edu/students/canvas-online-learning/>.

Equipment Requirements for LIVE Sections:

Internet access using a latest version of a web browser such as Firefox (preferred).

Latest version of Zoom software. This changes periodically without notification. If you already have Zoom, use that account. Basic Zoom.us is available free.

Laptop or tablet with camera or desktop computer with camera.

Earbuds with microphone – Apple MD827LL/A EarPods with Remote and Mic work well. Order on Amazon.com, <https://goo.gl/jLYfBG>.

Additional monitor – Live video conferencing is best facilitated with two monitors.

H. HST Netiquette Policy

HST Live is a convenience for distance broadcast and attendance. In terms of responsibilities, it is no different than on-campus participation. Attendance at all class sessions is required just as if in residence on the Memphis campus.

All absences, late arrivals, and early departures must be respectfully requested by the student and approved by the professor prior to beginning of class session. It is the professor's call to grant (or not grant) the exception. It is considered unprofessional to simply inform the professor that you will be early/late, especially during class.

“Making up” a missed session by watching the recording will be granted ONLY in extreme cases such as illness or family emergency (the same policy for those on the Memphis campus). Please make arrangements in your ministry context or employment to be in attendance for all calendared sessions (e.g. a staff meeting is not an excused absence). The same applies to arriving late or leaving early.

Be seated in an environment that approximates a classroom setting (e.g. a chair at a desk in your office). Create a distraction free environment. It is not acceptable to sit or lie down on your bed or in a recliner, lounge on your deck or on the beach, or sit in a coffee shop, etc.

Remain stationary at your computer during the class session except during breaks. For example, if you must go to the rest room, mute your audio/video, go quickly, return to your screen, un-mute, and resume with the class.

Failure to observe these and related etiquette matters will result in grade reductions at the professor's sole discretion.



**Appendix A
Sermon Feedback Form**

Preacher's Name: _____ Sermon Text: _____

Listener's Name: _____ Date: _____

What did you hear as the central idea of the sermon? _____

What in the sermon was a blessing you? _____

What did the preacher do well? _____

What could the preacher work on for next time? _____

Other notes: _____

Appendix B
Exegetical Notes Example

John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7)*, In *Christian Counter-Culture, The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1978), 164–65.

Note: Stott references Martin Luther: “‘You see,’ writes Martin Luther with great charm, ‘he is making the birds our schoolmasters and teachers. It is a great and abiding disgrace to us that in the gospel a helpless sparrow should become a theologian and a preacher to the wisest of men. . . . Whenever you listen to a nightingale, therefore, you are listening to an excellent preacher. . . . It is as if he were saying, ‘I prefer to be in the Lord’s kitchen. He has made heaven and earth, and he himself is the cook and the host. Every day he feeds and nourishes innumerable little birds out of his hand.’””

Idea for Sermon Use: I love Luther’s way of describing the birds around us as “preachers.” Birds are everywhere and around us every day. They are one of the most common types of animals, and the idea that there are these “preachers” all around us is really incredible to me. I may directly quote part of or all of this quotation in my sermon, or just summarize it. It is a really beautiful piece and could work well anywhere in my sermon, but perhaps best in my conclusion.

Jonathan T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 12.

Note: Pennington describes a . . .

Idea for Sermon Use: This note makes me think of . . .

Appendix C Manuscript Brief Example

Preacher: Matthew Love

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:2–10

Title: First Things First

Subject Question: Why did Paul thank God for the Thessalonian believers?

Compliment Answer: because of their work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope; God chose them; the Gospel came to them in word, in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in full conviction; they received the word in affliction and in joy; and they became examples to believers in Macedonia, Achaia, and all over the world.

Exegetical Idea: Paul thanks God for the Thessalonian believers because of their work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope; God chose them; the Gospel came to them in word, in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in full conviction; they received the word in affliction and in joy; and they became examples to believers in Macedonia, Achaia, and all over the world.

Homiletic Idea: First things first: Be thankful for the growth of the Gospel in others' lives.

Purpose: Members of my church will feel affirmed by my thankfulness to God for them (*specifically for the things in their lives that Paul is thankful for in the Thessalonians' lives: their work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope; God chose them; the Gospel came to them in word, in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in full conviction; they received the word in affliction and in joy; and they became examples to believers in Macedonia, Achaia, and all over the world*) and will be inspired to be thankful to God for others (*specifically for the things in their lives that Paul is thankful for in the Thessalonians' lives: their work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope; God chose them; the Gospel came to them in word, in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in full conviction; they received the word in affliction and in joy; and they became examples to believers in Macedonia, Achaia, and all over the world.*)

Concise Outline:

Introduction

I. The first thing that Paul does in this letter is to thank God for the growth of the Gospel in the lives of the Thessalonian believers.

II. First things first: I am thankful for the growth of the Gospel in your (*members of the Beebe Church of Christ*) lives.

III. We ought to practice putting first things first: thanking God for the growth of the Gospel in others' lives.

Conclusion

Appendix D

Sermon Prose Manuscript Example

Introduction

One person in my life for whom I am thankful to God is Mark. I met Mark when I was a student in college. Mark was a Bible teacher there, and since that was my major, I ended up having Mark for a few classes.

There was just something about Mark that really drew me in. You've met these people before, the sort of person who just intrigues you and might even perplex you, the sort of person who you want to be around. Well, that was Mark. Looking back, I know what it was in Mark that drew me to him: it was Christ in him. It was the way that the Gospel had taken root in his life and grown.

Mark taught me in classes, he sent me on mission trips, he mentored me. Because the gospel had taken root and grown in his life, Mark had a tremendous impact on my life and faith as a young student. And for that I am thankful.

What about you? Who is someone in your life for whom you're thankful? And not just generically thankful, but someone for whom you're thankful because of the way that the gospel has taken root and grown in their life?

(In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul names a number of people for whom he was thankful, and one of his earliest letters expresses thankfulness to the church meeting in Thessalonica.)

As we read this, listen for the things for which Paul was thankful in the lives of these believers.

[Read text: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10]

The first thing that Paul does in this letter is to thank God for the growth of the Gospel in the lives of the Thessalonian believers.

Paul thanks God because of the Thessalonians' work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope.

Paul thanks God for their "work of faith." There is no tension here between faith and work, is there? It is not their faith OR their work. It is their work OF their faith.

Real faith works, doesn't it? What is that distinction in James? Faith without works is dead. Long before James knew that theoretically, Paul knew it concretely in the lives of these believers in Thessalonica.

Paul thanks God for their "labor of love." I don't know what you think about when you hear the word "labor", but I know what I think about: the birth of our daughter. For hours, my wife labored; from sunup on a Sunday morning, until 10:30 at night. We had no idea what was coming down the pike, so to speak. We had no idea how our lives would change. But, it was a labor of love.

"Labor" isn't a very fun word is it? Being in labor with a child is hard work (or so I hear). Being a laborer is hard work, too. Labor takes work.

Paul is thankful for their labor of love. If I could be so bold as to rephrase that: Paul is thankful for the hard work they've done in the name of love. Love isn't always easy. It doesn't always slide downhill. And when people in my life have loved me with hard work I, like Paul, am deeply thankful.

Appendix E
Sermon Outline Example

Introduction: Story about Mark and the impact he had on me.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul names a number of people for whom he was thankful, and one of his earliest letters expresses thankfulness to the church meeting in Thessalonica.

Read text: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

I. The first thing that Paul does in this letter is to thank God for the growth of the Gospel in the lives of the Thessalonian believers.

- A. Paul thanks God because of the Thessalonians' *work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope.*
- B. Paul thanks God that God *has chosen* these believers.
- C. Paul thanks God because the Gospel came to the Thessalonians *in word, in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in full conviction.*
- D. Paul thanks God because the Thessalonians received the word *in affliction and in joy.*
- E. Paul thanks God because the Thessalonians *became examples* to believers in Macedonia, Achaia, and all over the world.

II. First things first: I thank God for the growth of the Gospel in your (members of the Beebe Church of Christ) lives.

- A. I think this passage teaches us today a very important lesson, not so much just in *what it says*, but *where it is located.*
- B. This is good for me to hear as a preacher.
- C. I am thankful for the way the Gospel has grown in your life.
- D. Before I say anything, let me take care of first things first: I thank God for the growth of the Gospel in your lives.

III. We ought to practice putting first things first: thanking God for the growth of the Gospel in others' lives.

- A. Mark showed me the importance of this, to go back to him.
- B. I am thankful to God for the growth of the Gospel in the life of Mark.
- C. In many of his letters in general, and in this letter to the Thessalonians in particular, the Apostle Paul put first things first, too.
- D. Putting first things first in our relationships with others is good for the relationship and it's good for us individually as well.

Conclusion: Who is it in your life you can give thanks to God for? Let them know.

Appendix F

Sermon Manuscript Outline Example

Introduction

One person in my life for whom I am thankful to God is Mark. I met Mark when I was a student in college. Mark was a Bible teacher there, and since that was my major, I ended up having Mark for a few classes.

There was just something about Mark that really drew me in. You've met these people before, the sort of person who just intrigues you and might even perplex you, the sort of person who you want to be around. Well, that was Mark. Looking back, I know what it was in Mark that drew me to him: it was Christ in him. It was the way that the Gospel had taken root in his life and grown.

Mark taught me in classes, he sent me on mission trips, he mentored me. Because the gospel had taken root and grown in his life, Mark had a tremendous impact on my life and faith as a young student. And for that I am thankful.

What about you? Who is someone in your life for whom you're thankful? And not just generically thankful, but someone for whom you're thankful because of the way that the gospel has taken root and grown in their life?

(In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul names a number of people for whom he was thankful, and one of his earliest letters expresses thankfulness to the church meeting in Thessalonica.)

As we read this, listen for the things for which Paul was thankful in the lives of these believers.

[Read text: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10]

I. The first thing that Paul does in this letter is to thank God for the growth of the Gospel in the lives of the Thessalonian believers.

A. Paul thanks God because of the Thessalonians' work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope.

1. Paul thanks God for their "work of faith."

a. There is no tension here between faith and work, is there?

i. It is not their faith OR their work.

ii. It is their work OF their faith.

b. Real faith works, doesn't it?

i. What is that distinction in James?

ii. Faith without works is dead.

iii. Long before James knew that theoretically, Paul knew it concretely in the lives of these believers in Thessalonica.

2. Paul thanks God for their "labor of love."

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