

ABSTRACT

The Gospel Arc: A Preaching Model to Help Preachers Experience
A Living Encounter with Jesus Christ and His Salvation with
All of Scripture while Preparing and Proclaiming the Sermon

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Those who preach with him in view, encounter him anew. This project will introduce the Gospel Arc preaching model to address the need for preachers to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation with the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon. The project will implement the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention with two mixed components: 1) a quantitative pre- and post-survey, and 2) the qualitative components of training local pastors in the Gospel Arc preaching model, implementing them in the participants' own preaching contexts for three weeks in close succession, and keeping a weekly guided journal during the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention. The purpose of the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention will be to determine the effect that the Gospel Arc preaching model has on the preacher's experience of Jesus Christ and his salvation within the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon.

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CHAPTER ONE

Statement of the Problem

The Problem

Those who preach with him in view, encounter him anew. There is a need for a preaching model that helps preachers experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation with the biblical text while preparing (crafting) and proclaiming (delivering) the sermon, resulting in gospel renewal. Moralism avoids Jesus Christ and his salvation both in sermon preparation and proclamation. Gospel renewal is the ordinary work of the Holy Spirit as he applies the good news of Jesus Christ and his salvation to individual lives, homes, churches, communities, places, and cultures. Therefore, gospel renewal is continually a need and immediately relevant.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to help preachers experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) within the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon by implementing the Gospel Arc preaching model.

Definitions

The Gospel Arc Preaching Model

The Gospel Arc is a preaching model. It is not so much a fixed homiletical method as it is a way to read and communicate the Scriptures. It utilizes an instinctive tapping into the way Jesus and the New Testament writers read the Bible. The Gospel

Arc preaching model presupposes the Bible as one ultimate, unfolding story of redemption climaxing in the life, death, resurrection, and present reign of Jesus Christ.

The hermeneutical core of the Gospel Arc preaching model is recognition of the historical and theological connection between the textual pole of a given passage in the Bible (Pole 1) and the contextual pole of the overall message of the Bible (Pole 2). In other words, there is a correspondence between the original historical meaning of a biblical text (Pole 1) and the overall message of the Bible, the climax of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, and his salvation (Pole 2).

The aim designed for the Gospel Arc preaching model is to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal). It is to intentionally create space for the Holy Spirit to work gospel renewal into the life of the preacher and his/her listeners with the biblical text during sermon preparation and proclamation.

The climax of the Gospel Arc preaching model is to represent Jesus Christ and his salvation according to one's chosen aspect or angle of the biblical text in such a way that it is both clear to the mind and real to the heart for both preachers and listeners. This context then creates the potential for individual and corporate gospel renewal.

Gospel Renewal

Gospel renewal is experiencing a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation in a justifying or sanctifying way. The gospel is the good news or "news of victory"¹ of the person and work of Jesus Christ. "If we were to sum up the content of the

1. "Euangelion," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, Gerhard Kittel, ed., G. W. Bromiley, trans. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 722.

Gospel in a single word, it would be Jesus the Christ.”² Furthermore, the good news message of Jesus Christ and his victorious work “does not merely declare salvation; it effects it . . . it is equated with its actuality.”³ The gospel reaches and renews individual lives, homes, churches, communities, places, and cultures. In other words, the gospel carries renewal or justifying and sanctifying grace with it.⁴

Therefore, gospel renewal is being reached and renewed by the personal active presence of Jesus Christ and his comprehensive salvation in, through, by, or with the gospel message. Gospel renewal is experiencing a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation in a justifying or sanctifying way. Gospel renewal in the context of preaching occurs when preachers and listeners experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation when the biblical text is being preached.

Gospel renewal or experiencing a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation looks like the engagement of all the faculties of a united heart: 1) clarity to the mind, 2) realness to the heart, and 3) inclination of the will beyond new or true information. Gospel renewal or experiencing a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation looks like: 1) a new experience of Jesus Christ and his salvation that is justifying, and 2) a deepening and maturing experience of Jesus Christ and his salvation that is sanctifying.

2. “Euangelion,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 731. For a recent investigation into the concept of the gospel, see Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).

3. Ibid., 723.

4. “The Gospel is not an empty word; it is effective power which brings to pass what it says because God is its author . . . The Gospel effects what it proclaims . . . it goes forth and works and produces fruit” (from Ibid., 731, 732, and 733).

Gospel renewal or experiencing a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation takes place on two levels—personal and corporate. Therefore, gospel renewal or experiencing a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation transforms individual lives, homes, churches, places, communities, and cultures.

Rationale for the Project

The Gospel Arc preaching model seeks to transform ministers, churches, and communities by means of gospel renewal utilizing all of Scripture. The compelling need for the Gospel Arc preaching model lies not in itself, but in the potential to create space for the Holy Spirit to do the work of gospel renewal through the biblical text in the life of preachers and hearers. Therefore, the rationale for the project is threefold: 1) the need for gospel renewal, 2) the need for preachers to experience gospel renewal, and 3) the need to preach for gospel renewal.

The Need for Gospel Renewal

“Where is Jesus!?” Every parent’s nightmare was experienced by Mary and Joseph after unknowingly leaving Jerusalem without their twelve-year-old boy (Luke 2:41-51). Leaving Jesus behind was not only a parental concern for Mary and Joseph, but it becomes a concern for all who would seek and “see” him.⁵

To help the Galatian Christians better understand themselves and repent of their racism and moralism, the Apostle Paul identifies a basic principle at work in all of humans, which is the impulse to save themselves (Gal 4:9). This is the common impulse

5. Anglican priest Johnny Sertin diagnoses the overall empty spiritual state of the church in England as that of “leaving Jesus behind” and emphasizes the Western church’s need to experience many mini-resurrections from “the death of leaving Jesus behind” (discussion with Johnny Sertin, “Sharing the Kingdom 7340 DMin Truett Theological Seminary,” London: May 20, 2016).

that drives and enslaves the human heart in a prison of pride and fear (Rom 8:15).

Therefore, the need for gospel renewal, according to Paul, is fixed in the basic fallen human condition to be one's own savior.

Working off the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther claims the default mode of the human heart is self-justification, works-righteousness, self-salvation, or achieved righteousness.⁶ In his view, leaving Jesus behind is what comes natural to people. It is simply what they do apart from God's gracious work in their lives. Therefore, the need for gospel renewal, according to Luther, is immediately relevant.

Richard Lovelace, a student of the history of individual and corporate gospel renewal, states that "only a fraction of the present body of professing Christians are solidly appropriating the justifying work of Christ in their lives."⁷ In other words, there is a need for Jesus Christ and his salvation not just to be known intellectually but also to be experienced. Gospel renewal counteracts the universal fallen impulse to leave Jesus behind, as Lovelace describes:

They [Christians] see little need for justification, although below the surface of their lives they are deeply guilt-ridden and insecure . . . in their day-to-day existence they rely on their sanctification for justification . . . drawing their assurance of acceptance with God from their sincerity, their past experience of conversion, their recent religious performance or the relative infrequency of their conscious, willful disobedience.⁸

The gospel of Jesus Christ and his salvation must continually reach and renew the unevangelized or unreached areas of the believer's life. Therefore, according to Lovelace, there is a continual need for gospel renewal among ministers, churches, and communities.

6. Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, edited by John Prince Fallows (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1979), xvi-xvii.

7. Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 101.

8. Ibid.

In the book of Galatians, the Apostle Paul says that even Peter, an Apostle and pillar of the church, believed the gospel at one level and yet did not at far deeper levels in his life. Even he had “un-evangelized” areas of his life. He relied on his sanctification for his justification, which was dramatically exposed by his racist treatment of the Gentile Galatian Christians (Gal 2:11-14). Strikingly, Paul’s solution to Peter’s racism was not “Stop it!” or “Five Steps to a Racist Free Life,” but the gospel: “But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all” (Gal 2:14).

Peter needed to identify intelligently and end functionally his reliance upon a circumcision-righteousness or race-righteousness. Peter needed to be reached and renewed afresh by Jesus’ righteousness or a grace-salvation. The functional transfer of trust from a specific strategy of self-salvation to Jesus Christ and his salvation is the heart of gospel renewal. The way to change lives is to change what the heart functionally trusts in, thereby changing what the heart functionally loves or worships. Every human being is and will be in continual need of this kind of renewal until the end of all things.

Timothy Keller says, “Revival is not a historical curiosity; it is a consistent pattern of how the Holy Spirit works in a community to arrest and counteract the default mode of the human heart. It is surely relevant to ministry in twenty-first-century global cultures, as it is relevant in every culture.”⁹ Gospel renewal is the justifying and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in individual lives, homes, churches, communities,

9. Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 55.

places, and cultures. Therefore, gospel renewal, personally and corporately, is an ever-present need and immediately relevant.¹⁰

The Need for Preachers to Experience Gospel Renewal

Preachers can and should seek to experience continual gospel renewal in their lives and ministries by employing a multiform approach to the means of grace.¹¹ The Gospel Arc preaching model, however, is specifically designed to create space for the preacher to experience gospel renewal during sermon preparation and proclamation. As stated, those who preach with him in view, encounter him anew.

What if the preacher's primary call to prepare and proclaim the Word of God intentionally created space for the Holy Spirit to do the work of gospel renewal in their life and ministry? The result would be the transformation of pastors, churches, communities, and the surrounding culture. In other words, there is the potential for a gospel movement to be generated and mobilized in a specific place because of the preacher's experience of gospel renewal in preparation and proclamation.

10. The church is both a gathered institution with "inherited traditions" organized under its officers and ministers to do Word and sacrament and a "dynamic movement of the Holy Spirit" encompassing all Christians living in the world "who have been discipled and equipped to bring the gospel to bear on all of life" (Keller, *Center Church*, 240-241, 249).

11. A means of grace is the "outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation" (*The Westminster Standards: The Westminster Confession of Faith, The Larger Catechism, The Shorter Catechism*, Suwanee: Great Commission Publications, 2007, Westminster Larger Catechism Question, 154, 62). Historically, the means of grace have been the Scriptures, the sacraments, the preached Word, prayer, public worship, and Christian fellowship in worship, community, nurture, service, witness, and other manifestations of ministry.

The Need to Preach for Gospel Renewal

Preaching Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture for gospel renewal seems to be an unknown cure today for a culture that has left Jesus behind. For many, preaching in the church today might best be characterized as an addiction to good advice.

The Crisis of Moralistic Preaching. The fundamental structure of the sermon today in evangelical churches is straightforward: 1) expound the biblical principle in the text, 2) exhort the biblical principle in the text, 3) support the exposition and exhortation with illustrations and practical applications.

The effect is immediate upon: 1) listeners struggling with the moral directive in the text who feel burdened and guilty and thereby seek to resolve both by trying harder, and 2) listeners not struggling with the moral directive in the text who think, “I’m so glad I’m not like them,” thus becoming further entrenched in self-righteousness. Ironically, Jesus is avoided, both in the Bible and the sermon.

Abraham Kuruvilla, a preaching professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, establishes a moralistic hermeneutic and homiletic in what he calls the “Christiconic interpretation”:

One may say that each periscope of the Bible is actually portraying a facet of Christlikeness, a segment of the image of Christ: what it means to fulfill a particular divine demand in that pericope after the manner of Christ . . . Each pericope depicts a facet of Christlikeness, even the ones that deal with particular characters in Scripture. In other words, to employ the narratives and characters of the OT for ethical purposes, as the text demands in its theology, *is* to preach Christ.¹²

12. Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 265-266.

Kuruvilla argues against such a misguided interpretation of the Scriptures: “In a nutshell, the biblical arguments for Christocentric preaching are weak. Before proposing a new hermeneutic for seeing Christ in Scripture, the priority of divine demand and the responsibility of human obedience must be established, for these form the foundation of the Christiconic interpretation to be described.”¹³

This type of preaching places Christ in all the Scriptures as example rather than Savior. The central message of the Bible in Christiconic preaching is, “Be like Jesus.” Christiconic preaching is good advice, not good news. Keller highlights the danger of turning the Bible and preaching into ethical expositions and exhortations disconnected from Jesus Christ and his salvation: “you can have all the sound doctrine possible and be fastidiously performing your ethical and religious duties according to biblical principles and have ‘no grace in the heart at all.’”¹⁴ “Good advice” preaching creates a church culture obsessed with self-salvation that inevitably leads to spiritual breakdown, toxicity of spirit (self-righteousness), missional impotence, and cultural resistance. Many today think they are rejecting God and Christianity, when they are simply rejecting moralism.

How did the moralistic form of preaching become so prevalent? The answer is it arose out of a moralistic reading of the Bible, which arose out of the moralistic impulse in the human heart. Because moralism comes natural to humans (Gal 4:9), when the enlightenment came along, it provided what people already craved, a substitute savior in

13. Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text*, 252. See pp. 211-269 for Kuruvilla’s more detailed critique of Christocentric preaching and his argument for Christiconic preaching.

14. Timothy Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (New York: Dutton, 2014), 179.

the form of rationalism.¹⁵ Lindbeck notes that the rationalistic lens for reading and preaching the Bible preceded biblical criticism, which then further entrenched a rationalized hermeneutical situation in the church.¹⁶ Furthermore, the addition of pietistic individualism and its naïve attempt to “leap back directly into the Bible” with a blank slate, neutral point of view, or view from nowhere cemented a rationalistic and wooden literal approach to the Bible based on “Newtonian science.”¹⁷

Preaching today has become so identified with moralism that it seems impossible to conceive of the one without the other, and therein lies the inherent challenge for preaching today.¹⁸ The identification between preaching and moralism is so complete today that the only perceivable way to stop the culture’s resistance to the church is to stop preaching. In one sense, this seems right because moralistic preaching is destructive, but in other sense, it is fundamentally wrong because moralistic preaching is not biblical preaching. Therefore, biblical preaching may not only be an unknown cure for moralism in the church and the church’s wrecked relationship with the culture, but also a fundamental divine source for the healing and renewal of both. Preaching today needs to break off its adulterous and abusive relationship with moralism and recognize its already established union to the Better Spouse (Rom 7:1-6).

15. Moralism or self-righteousness appears to be the default mode of the human condition from Genesis 3 onwards; thus the proliferation of self-salvation strategies in the world today or what the Apostle Paul calls “the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world” (Gal 4:9). Therefore, a moralistic reading of the Bible is simply the natural lens of the fallen human condition, and a rationalistic hermeneutic is like gasoline thrown on an already burning moralistic fire.

16. George Lindbeck, *The Church in a Postliberal Age*, James J. Buckley, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 72.

17. Ibid.

18. Preaching in the postmodern western church today is noticeably declining in practice. The church’s response to moralistic preaching in a postmodern culture is understandable—shrink preaching’s importance and practice.

Good News, Not Good Advice. Preaching that transforms ministers, churches, and communities proclaims good news, not good advice. Where is God? Where is God at work in people's lives, the church, and the world? Where does one find God? Where does God find individuals? How is the personal, active presence of God released into human lives, the church, and the world? The most fundamental answer, according to the Bible, is by hearing good news (Rom 10:14-17).

There is a big difference between good news and good advice, according to Martyn Lloyd-Jones: "Advice is counsel about something that hasn't happened yet, but you can do something about it. News is a report about something that has happened which you can't do anything about because it has been done for you and all you can do is respond to it."¹⁹ Lloyd-Jones delivered a famous illustration in an evening sermon series on 1 Corinthians 15 highlighting the difference between good news and good advice. An enhanced version goes like this:

Barbarians invade your country. Initial reports are devastating—death, destruction, and desolation. The king assembles his army to meet the foe, but his army is obliterated. The king's last heroic act is to send a wounded messenger back to the capital city. What does this near-to-death messenger do? He fearfully exhorts the inhabitants, "Archers on the wall! Cavalry at the west gate! Fight for your lives!" The messenger brings good advice about how to possibly survive, how to achieve an impossible deliverance. However, the gospel or good news is different. The king crushes the invading enemy, and then sends joyful messengers back to the capital to announce the good news: "Victory! The king has won! There is now deliverance! Salvation! Life! Joy! Freedom! There is no more fear of death! No more destruction!"²⁰

19. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "Glorious Gospel; Glorious God: 1 Corinthians 15.1-4," sermon, MLJ Trust (accessed October 15, 2016).

20. Ibid.

The joyful messengers proclaim the good news of the king's victory, of a victory won. Good advice is moralism, which is instruction about something still needing to be done. Good news is the report of God's victory, the announcement about something God has already done.

Lindbeck notes that the loss of good news as “the interpretive key to all of Scripture” after the Reformation, “gave birth to fundamentalism and to such strange aberrations (from the viewpoint of the historic exegetical mainstream) as Scofield Bible dispensational pre-millennialism.”²¹ He argues for the recovery of Jesus Christ and his comprehensive salvation as “the interpretive key to all of Scripture.”²² This gospel lens should provide the basis for preaching and church unity, community, renewal, and witness in the world today, even while maintaining real differences and distinctions between the various bodies of church denominations and traditions.²³

Research Question

The research for this intervention will be guided by one primary question: What effect did the Gospel Arc preaching model have on the preacher's experience of a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation within the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon?

21. Lindbeck, *The Church in a Postliberal Age*, 73.

22. Ibid., 72-73.

23. Ibid.

Significance of the Project

Any preaching model that seeks to redress preaching's moralistic tendency is of great value for the church and the world. Any preaching model that seeks to create space for the Holy Spirit to work gospel renewal into the life and ministry of the preacher has the potential to transform lives, homes, churches, and communities. Therefore, an intentional Christocentric preaching model has the potential to produce a gospel movement in a specific place by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel Arc preaching model seeks this kind of impact.

Those unfamiliar with Christocentric preaching may benefit from the Gospel Arc's accessible approach. It is a way of seeing and communicating the Bible as a lens more than a fixed set of rules or a list. Those familiar with Christocentric preaching may benefit from the Gospel Arc's intentional textual approach. It is a way to discover, experience, and deliver a specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation from the text to reach and renew lives. Therefore, it avoids a jumping-over-the-text-to-Jesus approach that some Christocentric preaching practices.

If the Gospel Arc preaching model is effective and worthwhile, then it should be a culturally adaptable model. It targets the universal human need to experience Jesus Christ and his salvation more than the instruction and exhortation of culturally-bound biblical principles. Furthermore, if effective and worthwhile, the Gospel Arc preaching model has the potential for a broader impact to be formalized into a "Center for Gospel Communication" (CGC) to transform ministers, churches, and communities.

CHAPTER TWO

Biblical and Theological Foundations

Introduction

“Let there be light” (Gen 1:3). God overcomes the darkness with verbal power at the beginning of all things. Imagine if light said, “Let me think about it!” During the great creative acts of God in Genesis, Scripture does not record God verbally expressing his wish and then acting wordlessly; rather, Scripture records God’s speaking as his acting.¹ The connection between God speaking and God acting is so enmeshed in the Scriptures that they are not only one and the same, but they are equated with God’s presence: “The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. . . . The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness: the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh (Psalm 29:5, 8).” In Timothy Ward’s words, “as we encounter his words, and as

1. The nature of the Bible as divine “speech act” or a “communicative act of a communicative agent fixed by writing” (Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in the Text?* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998], 225) presupposes that words do more than just convey information—they get things done. The Bible as divine speech act asserts not only that God’s speaking and God’s acting are one and the same, but also that God is personally and actively present in human lives and the world by his Scripture-Words. Anthony Thiselton agrees by noting the incarnational aspect of Scripture as a divine speech act: “the text is more than a ‘docetic’ or disembodied system of signifiers (Anthony Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading*, [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 75).” Timothy Ward asserts that non-speech act views of the Bible have one fundamental flaw—separating the Spirit’s revelatory and redemptive authority and work from the Scriptures. Therefore, Scripture is either replaced with the church (Catholic view), moral principles (conservative evangelical view), special anointed individuals (Charismatic view), or the human heart (Anabaptist view); Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scriptures as the Living and Active Word of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 92-93, 110-111. Keller unites the Spirit and Scripture together in a God-ordained union. Therefore, the hearer of the Bible has personal access to God and his gracious work in their lives: “God’s ongoing dynamic action through the Spirit is supremely related to the language and meanings of Scripture. In other words, as we unfold the meaning of the language of Scripture, God becomes powerfully active in our lives. The Bible is not merely information, not even just completely true information. It is ‘alive and active’ (Heb 4:12)—God’s power in verbal form. It is only as we understand the meaning of the words that God names us and shapes us and recreates us” (Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, [New York: Viking, 2015], 34).

we encounter the actions he performs by means of them, we are encountering God himself.”² Thus, the Bible is no ordinary book. It releases the personal active presence of God into human lives and the world. “Revelation is not simply about grace but is itself an act of grace.”³ Scripture does not simply convey information; it gets things done.⁴

Therefore, understanding how God gets things done with his Word is crucial. The preacher of Scripture should prepare and proclaim sermons that cut with the grain of what God is doing with his Word. This kind of preaching ministry will result in reaching and renewing lives, homes, the church, the workplace, the community, and the surrounding culture.

The biblical and theological foundations for the Gospel Arc preaching model seek to establish what God is primarily doing in all of Scripture. The answer is revealing and releasing Jesus Christ and his comprehensive salvation into the world. In other words, Jesus Christ and his salvation comprise the ultimate subject (speech) and intent (act) in all of Scripture to be personally and corporately experienced in a living encounter. Richard Bauckham notes that a Christocentric hermeneutic and homiletic of the Bible is not new: “The church’s reading of Scripture has usually presupposed its narrative unity, that is, that the whole of the Bible—or the Bible read as a whole—tells a coherent story. Any part of Scripture contributes to or illuminates in some way this one story, which is the story of God’s purpose for the whole world” revealed in Jesus Christ.⁵

2. Ward, *Words of Life*, 175.

3. Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 55.

4. Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, 51.

5. Richard Bauckham, “Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story,” in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 38.

Therefore, the project will first explore Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture by highlighting the apostolic practice of reading Scripture for gospel renewal. Second, Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture will be explored by considering how gospel renewal sanctifies one's reading of the Bible. Third, Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture will be explored by wrestling with the tension of authorial intent in the Bible. Finally, Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture will be explored by reading the Bible with Jesus and the New Testament writers.

*Reading Scripture for Gospel Renewal:
An Apostolic Practice*

It is easy in pastoral ministry today to be about anything and everything but Jesus Christ and his salvation or gospel renewal. It is a pastoral hazard to build a life and ministry around good things that functionally become pseudo-saviors and yet are unable to carry the weight of savior-hood. Only the grace of God revealed and released in Jesus Christ and his salvation can reach and renew pastors, churches, and the surrounding culture. According to the Apostle Paul, nothing can replace Jesus Christ and his salvation to save comprehensively, both in terms of justification and sanctification: “for I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). Reading Scripture for gospel renewal or to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation is an apostolic practice.

Gospel Renewal is an Apostolic Aim for Ministry

The Apostle Paul's statement in 1 Cor 2:2 communicates an apostolic aim or philosophy of ministry both in terms of what it says and what it does not say. Building a pastoral ministry around nothing except Jesus Christ and his salvation is remarkable,

since it is Paul's approach to ministering to both the skeptic and the Christian. In other words, the message of Jesus Christ and his salvation is not only how Paul first reached the Corinthians, but also how he continued to renew or sanctify them.

What is it about "nothing but Jesus" that is so transformative in ministry in terms of justification and sanctification? The answer is the verbal power of "him crucified," as opposed to "him exemplified." The Apostle's governing ministry vision was Jesus Christ as Savior, not merely moral example, spiritual leader, gifted teacher, ministry activist, or miracle worker. According to Paul, only the verbal power of Jesus Christ as Savior reaches and renews both the skeptic and the Christian. Therefore, the ultimate apostolic aim for all ministry is to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation or gospel renewal.

Gospel Renewal is an Apostolic Aim for Scripture

The Apostle Paul's statement in 1 Cor 2:2 concerning pastoral ministry being built around nothing except Jesus Christ and his salvation is also remarkable given the fact that the only Bible the Apostle had was the Old Testament. Nowhere in the Old Testament is "Jesus Christ and him crucified" explicitly mentioned. This means, in Keller's words, that "Paul understood that all Scripture ultimately pointed to Jesus and his salvation; that every prophet, priest, and king was shedding light on the ultimate Prophet, Priest, and King. To present the Bible 'in its fullness' was to preach Christ as the main theme and substance of the Bible's message."⁶

Paul's Christocentric understanding of the Old Testament was why he wrote in 1 Cor 15:3-4, "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was

6. Keller, *Preaching*, 15.

buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.” Jesus Christ and his salvation is in accordance with the Old Testament Scriptures. Therefore, according to the Apostle Paul, experiencing a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation or gospel renewal is the fundamental aim of all the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testament.

Gospel Renewal is an Apostolic Aim for Pastoral Care

Finally, the Apostle Paul’s statement in 1 Cor 2:2 concerning pastoral ministry being built around nothing except Jesus Christ and his salvation is remarkable given its scope for pastoral care. The Apostle decided to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified as the solution to address the Corinthian church’s well-documented range of personal, interpersonal, and corporate problems. Therefore, according to Paul, experiencing a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation or gospel renewal is sufficient to address the multiform needs and manifestations of the fallen human condition.⁷

Apostolic Practice Conclusion

The Apostle Paul decided to build his life and ministry around the good news of Jesus Christ and his salvation because the gospel message is the power of God to save comprehensively. The message of Jesus Christ and his salvation (the gospel) releases the personal, active presence of Jesus Christ into people’s lives and the world (Rom 1:16),

7. Patrick Lencioni in his bestselling book *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012, 8) points to personal and organizational health or renewal as the single most important factor in the business world: “I’ve become absolutely convinced that the seminal difference between successful companies and mediocre or unsuccessful ones has little, if anything, to do with what they know or how smart they are; it has everything to do with how healthy they are.”

which produces justifying and sanctifying change-on-the-spot or gospel renewal. The message of Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture comprises living and active words. These good news words produce personal and corporate gospel renewal, or as Paul put it, “Of this you have heard before in the word of truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth” (Col 1:5-6).

Therefore, to read the Bible with the fundamental aim of individual and corporate gospel renewal or to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation is to cut with the grain of: 1) Paul’s apostolic approach to ministry, 2) his apostolic reading and communication of Scripture, and 3) his apostolic approach to pastoral care for the multiform needs of the church. According to the Apostle, gospel renewal is the pattern of the Holy Spirit’s work in a community (Col 1:5-6).

Reading Scripture alongside Gospel Renewal

Graeme Goldsworthy connects reading the Bible accurately (or hermeneutics) to gospel renewal: “Our ability to interpret Scripture must be saved, justified and sanctified through the gospel.”⁸ He means not only that Jesus Christ and his salvation comprise the Bible’s own hermeneutic or interpretive lens, but also that growing in the ability to read the Bible accurately is a powerful aspect of gospel renewal. In other words, growing in the ability to both read Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture and to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of life are interrelated aspects

8. Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 16.

of the personal sanctification aspect of gospel renewal. Therefore, sanctification means not only conformity to Christ in one's character but also in one's ability to read the Bible Christocentrically. Both one's character and hermeneutic must undergo continual gospel renewal.

Where, however, does the freedom, motivation, and effort to pursue hermeneutical sanctification come from for the pastor, parishioner, or the church? The answer is from the gospel itself, as Goldsworthy describes,

Any aspect of sanctification, or growth in holiness, is clouded by our ongoing sinfulness and ignorance of the truth, yet we remain secure in the knowledge of our free justification on the grounds of Christ's righteousness for us. This justification does not, as it is sometimes represented, relieve us of the motive or responsibility to strive for holiness. Indeed, our free justification provides the only legitimate grounds and the most powerful motive for such striving. Likewise, the gospel presents us with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who, in his earthly life, perfectly interpreted the word of his Father. In so doing he justified the fallible attempts of his people to interpret the word. The justification of our hermeneutics by the perfect hermeneutics of Christ is the motivation for us to strive for hermeneutical sanctification.⁹

Believers strive to read their Bibles in a more Christ-centered or sanctified way because Jesus read, applied, theologized, communicated, and overall handled the Scriptures perfectly for them. For example, unlike the first Adam in the garden, the better Adam in the wilderness relied upon or lived by every word that came from the mouth of the Lord (Lk 4:1-13).

Therefore, Jesus' hermeneutical righteousness, noetic righteousness, or epistemological righteousness becomes the basis for our freedom, motivation, and effort to pursue a renewed mind not only in life but also in handling the Bible.¹⁰ The power of

9. Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 18.

10. *Ibid.*, 60-61.

the gospel for salvation (Rom 1:16) includes the renewing of the mind (Rom 12:1-2).

Believers have the mind of Christ (justification) and therefore strive for the mind of Christ experientially or functionally in life and ministry (sanctification), which includes how the Bible is handled (Phil 2:5).

Peter Leithart gives an example of how the ability to interpret the Scriptures must be saved. He highlights the bad habit of peeling the medium of the Bible away from the message of the Bible. This is done to make the Bible practical, which “often means drawing moralistic conclusions from the text.”¹¹

Moreover, Leithart states that conservative evangelicals routinely separate the “husk” or medium of the Scriptures from the “kernel” or message of the Scriptures.¹² In other words, the verbal expressions of the Bible are discarded for what really matters—the truth or meaning. If the “husk” is separated from the “kernel,” however, how does one determine the meaning of the “kernel”? Ever since the battle for the Bible in the Enlightenment, reason has assumed the authority to determine the meaning of the “kernel.”¹³ A key player in the battle for the Bible was a Dutch Lutheran humanist, physician, and amateur theologian named Lodewijk Meyer, who wrote about “Philosophy as the Interpreter of Holy Scripture.” Leithart adds,

Meyer’s book is important because in it, he initiates a hermeneutical method that detaches the truth and meaning of Scripture from its verbal expression. For Meyer, the evident claims of the text are to be taken as true only if they are judged reasonable. Subjecting the Bible to a rational test, Meyer treats the surface of the

11. Peter J. Leithart, *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 30.

12. Leithart defines the “husk” of the Bible as, “the authors’ word choices, structural organization, tropes and allusions, and intertextual quotations” (Leithart, *Deep Exegesis*, vii). Therefore, the “husk” of the Bible is its verbal expressions or the medium by which its meaning, truth, or message is inscripturated and communicated.

13. As cited by Leithart, *Deep Exegesis*, 7.

Bible—its ordinary language, poetry, metaphor, and narrative—as dispensable. The Bible’s truth is found in the rationally justifiable message and not in the rustic letter; it is the rational core that remains after the husk is removed.¹⁴

Therefore, the ability to interpret the greater authority of Scripture must be saved from an overdependence upon the lesser authority of reason. If this were to happen, then the sanctifying change would be immediate—namely, the end of over-trusting a wooden literalistic and rationalistic hermeneutic that pumps out moralistic messages. The message and the medium of the Bible are married. Both, together, deliver the good news of Jesus Christ and his salvation for personal and corporate gospel renewal: “We get to the richly varied *semus plenior* of the sacramental word not by moving past the letter to a spiritual sense, not by treating the letter as a husk for removal. We get at the riches of Scripture precisely by luxuriating in the letter, by squeezing everything we can from the text as written.”¹⁵

Reading Scripture through the Lens of Double Authorship

How many authors of the Bible are there? Who is the real author of the Bible? Keller notes four competing views of biblical authorship that wrestle with the tension of authorial intent in the Bible: 1) the human author only view, 2) the divine author only view, 3) the divinely inspired human author only view, and 4) the double authorship view.¹⁶

14. Leithart, *Deep Exegesis*, 10.

15. *Ibid.*, vii.

16. Tim Keller and Edmond Clowney, “Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World,” lecture, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS, Special Seminar on Christ and Culture (accessed; July 10, 2016).

The Human Author Only Lens

The human author only view either rejects divine authorship formally or functionally. When human authorship jettisons any meaningful divine authorship, then the canonical context or unified message of the Bible is lost. In other words, when Moses says one thing, David another, and then Luke and Paul still something else, then the unity of the Bible is lost. Without a divine author, there is no ultimate metanarrative of the Bible to integrate the messages from each of the human authors.

Furthermore, any effort to systematize significant biblical ideas are found wanting before the theological silos of Moses, David, Luke, Paul, et al. Therefore, the aim of the human author only view of the Bible is to discover each human author's single autonomous intent.¹⁷

The Divine Author Only Lens

The divine author only view either rejects human authorship formally or functionally. When divine authorship jettisons any meaningful human authorship, then the human and the historical become irrelevant. In other words, an allegorical or woodenly literal approach to the Bible prevails, rending revelation from its historical embodiment¹⁸ and producing “no real historical or theological connection between the text and its spiritual meaning.”¹⁹

17. Keller and Edmond Clowney, “Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World.”

18. Ibid.

19. Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 77.

In the divine author only view, the human author's intent, or the original historical meaning, is avoided for a "deeper spiritual meaning"²⁰ hidden in the text. Therefore, the aim of the divine author only view is to discover the deeper spiritual meaning in the text. This is done not only without the aid of the human author, but also only with the aid of the human reader, in the form of imagination and/or special revelatory anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The Divinely Inspired Human Author Only Lens

The divinely inspired human author only view is most commonly associated with a "non-Christocentric evangelical approach."²¹ Although God inspired the human author, he is not an author in any meaningful way. The human author's single conscious intent is all that matters.²² Therefore, the human author's single conscious intent is not only God's intent but also only God's intent, as Walter Kaiser observes,

Only one verbal meaning is to be connected with any passage of Scripture. . . . The Spirit takes the single truth-intention of the author . . . Nowhere, then, does Scripture support the view that the Bible has a multi-track concept of meanings. If the human author did not receive by revelation the meaning in question, then exegetes and readers have no right to identify their meanings with God.²³

The divinely inspired human author only view claims pure objective exegetical support in its pursuit of textual meaning, whereas the double authorship view, it claims, is

20. Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, 77.

21. Keller and Clowney, "Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World."

22 Ibid.

23 Walter Kaiser, *The Single Intent of Scripture*, in G.K. Beal, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 66-67, 69.

too subjective or speculative. Keller, however, notes that the divinely inspired human author only view suffers from being “just as speculative” as the double author view.²⁴

For example, in seeking to discover the original historical meaning of a passage, some interpreters see the human author knowing more than others, while other interpreters see the human author knowing less.²⁵ Furthermore, Philip Payne notes the inevitability of context and the challenge it provides: “The exegete who limits his discussion of the meaning of a passage to what he is convinced was the intention of the author will produce a different kind of exegesis than the exegete who lets the text within its total context determine the meaning.”²⁶ Therefore, when working with a text, both the textual intent and the inevitable contextual intent wrestle with objective and subjective elements of interpretation.

Poythress presses further by noting that even if readers “confine ourselves to people who hold to the classic doctrine of inspiration . . . [as] both God’s word and the word of the human authors . . . we still do not have agreement about the relation of God’s meaning to the meaning of the human author.”²⁷ Citing Darrell Bock’s research, Vern Poythress counts “no less than four distinct approaches among evangelicals” attempting to work out the relation of meaning between God’s meaning and the human author’s meaning.²⁸ There will always be both objective and subjective elements involved in

24. Keller and Clowney, “Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World.”

25. Ibid.

26. Philip Barton Payne, “The Fallacy of Equating Meaning with the Human Author’s Intention,” in G. K. Beale, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 80, footnote 19.

27. Poythress, “Divine Meaning of Scripture,” 83.

28. Ibid.

interpreting the human and the divine intent of any given passage of the Bible. Therefore, to reject the double authorship view based on the presupposition that the human intention inherently possesses superior properties of objectivity over the divine intention is unfounded.

The Double Author Lens

The double author view of the Bible is closely connected to a “Christocentric approach to the Bible.”²⁹ The double author view understands the Bible to have two authors, the human and the divine, both of whom authored the Bible in a dynamic process of inspiration.³⁰ The dynamic of the double authoring process preserves the concept of divine intention through human intention as well as divine intention beyond human intention in terms of correspondence, escalation, and overall unity. The ultimate divine intention completes the original human intention yet does not contradict it. The reason, Greidanus asserts, is that God not only worked sovereignly in human history and salvation history, but also in the historical inscripturation process of the Scriptures.³¹

A True Understanding, Not an Exhaustive Understanding. Do the human authors fully grasp the divine intention in their historical writings at every turn? The answer is

29. Keller and Clowney, “Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World.”

30. The importance of biblical inspiration (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; John 16:12-15) lies in the divine origin of the words or speech acts rather than in the precise manner of its authoring. Ward writes, “All major Reformed writers on the topic, from Calvin through to Warfield, are agreed that the main thrust of the doctrine of inspiration is that the words of Scripture have their origin in God. Whether the focus of interest is the means by which God acted in the production of Scripture should be on prior events in the writer’s life, where God through the Spirit spoke to him words he later wrote, or on the actual moment of composition, is a secondary matter, over which differences of emphasis do not count for a great deal . . . in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries too much speculation arose in some quarters over the mechanics of divine authorship through human authors” (Ward, *Words of Life*, 82).

31. Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 249.

they had a true understanding of what they wrote but not an exhaustive one. The incomplete or partial understanding of the human author means God has an authorial intent that must be considered, whether the human author is conscious of it or not.

Raymond Brown calls this gap in the text between the human author's conscious intention and God's intention the *sensus plenior*: "that additional, deeper meaning, intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author, which is seen to exist in the words of a biblical text (or group of texts, or even a whole book) when they are studied in the light of further revelation or development in the understanding of revelation."³² Greidanus provides an example of *sensus plenior* in Numbers 21, noting that Moses was not likely to know that in "relating the story of the bronze serpent he was sketching a type of Christ. The type in this passage is discovered only from the New Testament perspective when Jesus makes use of this event to proclaim his own saving work."³³ Philip Payne presses the point by noting not only the gap in the text between the human author's intention and God's intention, but also in the understanding of the human author: "the scriptural text seems to teach that at least in certain instances the biblical writer was not aware of the full import of his own words . . . there were certain things the biblical writers conveyed that they themselves did not fully understand."³⁴

32. Raymond Brown, *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture*, 92, quoted by Vern Poythress, *Divine Meaning of Scripture*, in G. K. Beale, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 110.

33. Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 233.

34. Philip Barton Payne, "The Fallacy of Equating Meaning with the Human Author's Intention", in G. K. Beale, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text*, 76-77. Payne notes Daniel 8:27 where Daniel says he was not only appalled by the vision God gave him but also "did not understand it." Payne also cites Abraham (Gen 22.8) and Caiaphas (John 11.51) of speaking better than they knew.

Scripture as the Inscripturation of Redemptive History. Does the double author view avoid allegory when it argues for a *sensus plenior*, a gap in authorial understanding and intention that can occur at times between the human author and God? In other words, does the double author view avoid the original historical meaning of the human author at times for some deeper divine meaning beyond the original text? The answer is the double author view not only establishes the original historical meaning of the text, but also the ultimate historical meaning of the text, which is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The original historical meaning of the human author is integrated into the ultimate redemptive-historical meaning of the divine author. In this way, the double author view establishes God's sovereign authorship of redemptive history and its inscripturation through multiple human authors in various historical contexts. Therefore, the double author view is decidedly both historical and theological.

Furthermore, redemptive history is not static, segmented, nor limited to a specific human author within a specific point in time.³⁵ Rather, redemptive history unfolds progressively and dynamically by means of multiple authors covering thousands of years that ultimately culminate in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Geerhardus Vos likens the progressive nature of redemptive history and its inscripturation to a seed: "The progressive process is organic: revelation may be in seed form which yields later full growth accounting for diversity but not true difference because the earlier aspects of the

35. Historical silos happen by default in the divinely inspired human author only view due to meaning being restricted to each human author's conscious historical field of vision.

truth are indispensable for understanding the true meanings of the later forms and vice versa.”³⁶

Therefore, the double author view does not avoid the original historical meaning as in allegory, nor isolate the original historical meaning from redemptive history as in the divinely inspired human author only view. Rather, the double author view establishes the original historical meaning and then integrates it into redemptive history, thereby accounting for both human authorship and God’s sovereign authorship converging in the inscripturation of redemptive history. The double author view arises out of the nature of Scripture itself as the inscripturation of redemptive history, not the avoidance of it.

The Central Figure of Redemptive History. The double author view of the Bible not only best accounts for the nature of Scripture as the inscripturation of redemptive history, but also for the inscripturation of the central figure in redemptive history, as Sidney Greidanus captures:

The unity of redemptive history implies the *Christocentric* nature of every historical text. Redemptive history is the history of Christ. He stands at its center, but no less at its beginning and end . . . Scripture discloses the theme, the *scopus* of its historiography right at the beginning. “Genesis 3.15,” Veer says, “places all subsequent events in the light of the tremendous battle between Christ coming into the world and Satan the ruler of this world, and it places all events in the light of the complete victory which the Seed of the woman shall attain. In view of this, it is imperative that not one single person be isolated from this history and set apart from this great battle. The place of both opponents and co-workers can only be determined Christologically. Only insofar as they received their place and task in the development of this history do they appear in the historiography of Scripture. From this point of view the facts are selected and recorded.”³⁷

36. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1996), 7.

37. Sidney Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts* (Toronto: Wedge, 1970), 135.

If Jesus Christ is the central figure of redemptive history and the Bible is the inscripturation of redemptive history, then the Bible inherently must be Christocentric. Therefore, a Christocentric reading of an Old Testament event, per Greidanus, is “simply understanding this event in its full redemptive-historical context. Moreover even though we discover this fuller meaning only retrospectively from a later stage of redemptive history, from God’s perspective it was always there in his overall design of redemptive history.”³⁸

Richard Hays agrees and sees a retrospective gospel lens picking up the original historical signifiers embedded in the original historical meaning by a God “who had scripted the whole biblical drama in such a way that it had multiple senses. Some of these senses are hidden, so that they come into focus only retrospectively . . . in light of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.”³⁹ He posits that a retrospective reading of the Bible highlights God’s ultimate intention or speech act being Jesus Christ and his salvation:

The Evangelists were convinced that the events of Jesus’ life and death and resurrection were in fact revelatory: they disclosed the key to understanding all that had gone before. Of course, this involves reassessment and transformation. After the resurrection, the community of Jesus’ followers returns to reread Scripture under the guidance of the Spirit and experiences, again and again, an “Aha!” reaction. Their eyes were opened anew.”⁴⁰

The double author view accounts for God sovereignly designing and imbedding in Israel’s history (or Old Testament revelation) a vast matrix of meaning that signifies not only itself in its own original historical context, but also God’s final and full revelation of

38. Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura*, 252.

39. Richard Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press), 2014, 104, and Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 348.

40. *Ibid.*, 104-5.

Jesus Christ and his salvation. The human authors may or may not have possessed exhaustive understanding of what they wrote, but God did.

Therefore, biblical hermeneutics involves pursuing an interpretive arc between the two poles of: 1) the human author's original historical meaning, and 2) the divine author's progressive revelation and final and full meaning of Jesus Christ and his salvation. Biblical accuracy means reading both forward from the text to Jesus Christ and his salvation and backwards (retrospectively) from Jesus Christ and his salvation to the text. This dual reading of the Bible recognizes that "intertextual semantic effects can flow both directions: an earlier text can illuminate a later one and vice versa."⁴¹

The Odd Couple of Modern Criticism and Evangelical Hermeneutics

Hays points out that modern criticism and evangelical hermeneutics today are an odd couple. They both possess the same hermeneutical position that the "only legitimate interpretation of the Old Testament is strictly constrained to the original historical meaning of the Hebrew authors."⁴² Therefore, they both declare "*a priori* that the Gospel writers were wrong and misguided and that their claims to revelatory retrospective reading are false."⁴³

Whether it is the modern critic "debunking the Gospel's interpretations of the Old Testament," or the evangelical "contending desperately that the authors of the Old Testament's narratives and poems actually did intentionally forecast the details of Jesus'

41. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 347.

42. *Ibid.*, 359.

43. *Ibid.*

life,” both work from the “rationalistic historicism of high modernity”⁴⁴ rather than from a robust double author view of the Bible. Therefore, both confine biblical meaning to the human author’s conscious intent, thereby functionally avoiding any meaningful divine authorship.

Double Authorship Conclusion

The double author view best accounts for the working tension between the human author’s intention and the divine author’s intention, not only in any given passage, but also by accounting for the progressive unfolding of redemptive history and its inscripturation. The dynamic of the double authoring process preserves both divine intention through human intention and divine intention beyond human intention in terms of correspondence, escalation, fulfillment, and overall unity. Frederick Bruner summarizes the merits of double authorship this way: “Historical-critical exegesis honors the humanity of Scripture; theological exegesis honors Scripture’s divinity. Historical exegesis can keep us honest; theological exegesis can keep us relevant.”⁴⁵

Reading Scripture with Jesus and the New Testament Writers

How did Jesus and the New Testament writers read the Bible? They read the Scriptures retrospectively through the new or final revelatory lens of Jesus Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. The revelatory act of Jesus Christ and his resurrection changed everything, including how they read their Bible.

44. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 359.

45. Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Matthew Commentary: The Christbook Matthew 1-12* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 33.

Reading Scripture with Jesus

How did Jesus read the Bible? Summarizing the textual evidence from the

Gospels, R. T. France answers:

He (Jesus) uses persons in the Old Testament as types of himself (David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jonah) . . . he refers to Old Testament institutions as types of himself and his work (the priesthood and the covenant); he sees in the experiences of Israel foreshadowings of his own; he finds the hopes of Israel fulfilled in himself.⁴⁶

According to France, Jesus read the Bible in light of himself. Therefore, the person and work of Jesus Christ is the optic key for understanding, applying, and communicating the Scriptures accurately. Luke 24:13-47 and John 5:39-47 are two classic passages highlighting Jesus' own exposition of the Scriptures in the light of himself.

Luke 24:13-47. Luke 24:13-47 unfolds with one unexpected event after another, climaxing with a Bible study led by the risen Redeemer. In Luke's account, the recently risen and yet unrecognized Jesus meets Cleopas and his unnamed friend on the road to Emmaus. The suspenseful twist in the story revolves around how Jesus will reveal himself to these downcast and dim-sighted disciples. Will Jesus reveal himself by way of a new heavenly vision from beyond the grave?⁴⁷ Will Jesus encounter them directly by insisting, "Hey fellas, it's me! Really!" No, Jesus reaches them by simply sharing the Scriptures with them:

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

46. R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1998), 75.

47. Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 14.

And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. . . . They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:31-32)

Therefore, in Luke’s record of the first resurrection appearance, Jesus’ primary reaching and renewing pattern for the church has been established: he reveals himself and his salvation in and with the Scriptures. Predating the New Testament, the Scriptures with which Jesus works are the Old Testament Scriptures. Therefore, he solidifies his role as the ultimate “exegete of the biblical story” and the “definitive interpreter” of the Old Testament.⁴⁸ James Edwards summarizes Jesus’ approach to reading the Bible as presenting “himself as the fulfillment of Scripture, and his life as both the interpretation and actualization of Scripture (vv. 27, 44-45).”⁴⁹

Three interpretive dynamics are worth noting in Jesus’ approach to “opening” the Scriptures to the two Emmaus disciples. First, he does not rebuke them for their failure to understand and believe his own words and predictions about his death and resurrection. Rather, he rebukes them for their failure to understand and to “believe all that the prophets have spoken” about him and his salvation.⁵⁰ The rebuke is real, not imagined, because Jesus assumes that every single prophet with whom they were familiar spoke of him and his salvation. Therefore, they did not understand the Bible as well as they thought. Rather, they were “foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken” (24:25).

48. Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 13.

49. James Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 714.

50. Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 14.

Second, Jesus sees “all the Scriptures” (v. 27) bearing witness to him, not just a few carefully selected proof texts. Therefore, “the whole story of Israel builds to its narrative climax in Jesus. That is what Jesus teaches them on the road.”⁵¹ He assumes an inherent hermeneutical witness to him in all the Old Testament Scriptures, both in its summary and in its parts.

Third, Jesus rereads or renarrates the Bible for them. In other words, he “interpreted to them” the Scriptures (v. 27) or “opened” them (v. 32) from two directions: 1) he read forward from Scripture to himself, and 2) he read backwards from himself to Scripture. Jesus read forward from the Scriptures to himself because “Scripture forms the matrix within which the recent shattering events in Jerusalem become intelligible. . . . Jesus cannot be understood apart from Jewish scripture.”⁵² Jesus read backwards from his life, death, and resurrection to the Scriptures because “Jewish scripture cannot be understood apart from Jesus.”⁵³ Hays notes that reading forward from the Scriptures to Jesus Christ and his salvation and reading backwards from Jesus Christ and his salvation to the Scriptures forms an “integrative interpretation,” an “intertextual interpretation,” or a “figural correspondence.”⁵⁴ This “intertextual interpretation” exists because the original historical meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures signifies not only itself, but also (both/and) the final and full revelation of Jesus Christ and his salvation.

51. Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 14.

52. Ibid., and Richard Hayes quoting R. W. L. Moberly, *Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus*, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 51, on the same page 14.

53. Moberly, *Bible, Theology, and Faith*, 51.

54. Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 2.

How does the original historical meaning of an Old Testament passage signify not only itself but also Jesus Christ and his salvation? The answer Jesus gives from Luke 24 is Moses, all the prophets, and the Psalms carry within them a surplus of meaning divinely embedded by God. The surplus of meaning is not only capable of signifying the original historical textual meaning but also the redemptive-historical contextual meaning. The surplus of meaning is hidden, partial, or incomplete until the new revelatory light or lens of Jesus Christ and his resurrection arrives, thereby fully “opening” the Scriptures (see also Heb 1:1).

Therefore, the final and full revelation of Jesus Christ and his salvation completes a pattern of revelatory correspondence and unity that began in the Old Testament Scriptures. The arrival of the new revelatory gospel lens now retrospectively rereads or re-narrates all previous revelation. This explains why the puzzled Emmaus disciples had all the facts of their familiarity with the Old Testament, Jesus’ own teaching, their own witness of Jesus’ life and works, the report of the empty tomb, and the angelic report of the resurrection, but still could not make any sense of it all. They were missing the new and final revelatory light or lens of Jesus’ resurrection. They were missing the new and final revelatory pole of a figural correspondence.

Therefore, with the final revelatory lens of Jesus Christ and his salvation in place, Jesus retrospectively rereads the Scriptures to them. The result is their hearts burned within them “as he opened to [them] the Scriptures” (v. 32). Hays summarizes Jesus’ “intertextual interpretation” of the Scriptures as providing hermeneutical unity and sanity:

Once the pattern of correspondence has been grasped, the semantic force of the figure flows both ways, as the second event receives deeper significance from the first. For that reason, a hermeneutical strategy that relies on figural interpretation of the Bible creates deep theological coherence within the biblical narrative; it

“sets forth the unity of the canon as a single cumulative and complex pattern of meaning.”⁵⁵

John 5:39-47. In this passage is found Jesus’ fundamental hermeneutical claim in his own words. Furthermore, he illuminates, as Hays puts it, “John’s approach to reading Israel’s Scripture”⁵⁶:

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. . . . Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? (*John 5.39-40, 45-47*).

Moses wrote of Jesus. Despite their rigorous study and teaching of the Scriptures, the religious leaders were exercising “interpretive failure.”⁵⁷ They failed to see Jesus Christ as “the true and ultimate referent to whom Moses’ words point.”⁵⁸

Once again, Jesus asserts a surplus of meaning in the Old Testament Scriptures, in this case Moses’ writings. The surplus of meaning signifies not only its own original historical meaning but also Jesus Christ and his salvation. Therefore, according to Jesus, understanding the original historical meaning is not enough, and setting one’s interpretive hope on Moses or David is not enough (v. 45). One must hermeneutically connect or integrate Moses’ or David’s original historical meaning to the ultimate redemptive-historical meaning in Jesus Christ and his salvation. When this dual authorial intent is

55. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 3 and quoting Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 33.

56. *Ibid.*, 282.

57. *Ibid.*, 283.

58. *Ibid.*, 283.

pursued, then the biblical text is truly understood, applied, and communicated. Otherwise, “interpretive failure” results, tending toward empty moralistic expositions.

How much did Moses know about Jesus Christ and his salvation when he wrote? The answer is enough to accuse the religious leaders of avoiding Jesus and his salvation in his writings (Jn 5:45). What Moses knew was true, even though it was not exhaustive.⁵⁹ Therefore, various facets of Moses’s writings reveal various facets of Jesus Christ and his salvation. Each revealed facet of Jesus Christ and his salvation in Moses’ writings releases the power of God for salvation upon the hearer. This helps to understand why Jesus says that Moses’ writings “bear witness about me” (v. 40). Moses’ writings become the occasion and the location for personally encountering Jesus Christ and his salvation. Therefore, the personal active presence of Jesus Christ and his salvation is released in Moses’ writings.

In conclusion, the aim of the Old Testament Scriptures, according to Jesus in John 5:39-47, is to encounter him and his salvation or to experience gospel renewal. John 5:39-47 records Jesus inserting himself into the Bible in a corresponding, fulfilling, escalating, or completing revelatory way. Jesus Christ and his salvation retrospectively reinterprets all previous revelation, so that we “come to [him] that [we] may have life (v. 40),” even in the writings of Moses.

59. Did Moses know exhaustively what David knew? Doubtful. Therefore, even as we move through redemptive history, there is an apparent gap in revelatory knowledge between an earlier human author and a later one. There is no gap, however, in the revelatory knowledge of the divine author who sovereignly orchestrated not only the unfolding redemptive-historical events that culminate in the event of Jesus Christ and his salvation, but also the inscripturation of those events.

Reading Scripture with the Gospel Writers

Is the Old Testament silent about Jesus Christ? The Gospel writers do not think so, since all four of them “assert that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead actually provides the hermeneutical clue that decisively integrates Israel’s entire system of meaning formation.”⁶⁰ The following explores how each gospel writer retrospectively reads the Old Testament Scriptures through the lens of the person and work of Jesus Christ and yet does so with his own interpretive voice.

Reading a Transfigured Scripture with Matthew. Matthew’s voice is prophetically explicit as he both predicts and expounds with clarity Jesus Christ and his salvation from the Old Testament Scriptures. For Matthew, Jesus is the ultimate interpreter and fulfiller of Israel’s story, and thus he transfigures Israel’s story: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matt 5:17). Jesus carries Israel’s story forward, thereby reconfiguring both Israel and the Torah.⁶¹ Therefore, as Richard Burridge observes, Matthew moves Jesus

around the river Jordan, the wilderness, and the mountain—all immediately reminding us of the stories in Exodus. . . . Matthew carefully and cleverly draws his portrait of Jesus as another Moses, the new Teacher of Israel—but with one further geographical point. While Moses is shown the land of Israel from his mountain (Deut. 34.1-4), Jesus sees “all the kingdoms of the world” (Matt 4.8).⁶²

The early church embraced Matthew’s explicit prophetic reading of Scripture by emphasizing Jesus’ fulfillment not only of the direct prophecies originating in Israel, but

60. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 3.

61. *Ibid.*, 351.

62. Richard Burridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 72-73.

also of Israel's own historical experiences.⁶³ The entire Old Testament for Matthew, both its narrative history and theological exposition, intentionally prefigures Jesus Christ and his salvation.

Furthermore, this prefiguration does not devalue Israel's story but rather front-loads it with the highest potency of value, since it is divinely and therefore inherently connected to the story of Jesus Christ and his salvation. Hays adds,

All of Scripture is a great coherent story in which the elements of Israel's past point toward a messianic consummation. . . . This consummation transfigures the story that has gone before, and the hermeneutically transfigured story of Israel remains for Matthew a constitutive intertext, a *Grundgeschichte* that serves as the primary matrix for the story of Jesus.⁶⁴

At the same time, Jesus is more than Israel 2.0, as Burrridge explains, "He is all that the great heroes were—and more. He fulfills Israel's history and scriptures, law and prophets. He is the Teacher, the son of Abraham, the Davidic Messiah-King, the Lord, the Son of God himself, present with his people."⁶⁵ Jesus is the new wine bursting the old wine skins.

Reading a Mysterious Scripture with Mark. Mark's voice is mysteriously veiled in his reading of the Old Testament Scriptures. He employs language "rich in symbolic vocabulary"⁶⁶ and with "cryptic scriptural pointers"⁶⁷ to unfold the "awesome mystery"⁶⁸

63. Grant R. Osbourne, Clinton E. Arnold, eds., *Matthew*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. #1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 184.

64. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 188.

65. Burrridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading*, 78.

66. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 349.

67. *Ibid.*, 350.

68. *Ibid.*, 249.

that is Jesus Christ. Hays expounds, “Mark’s hermeneutical strategy, therefore, is to provide cryptic scriptural pointers that draw the discerning reader into the heart of the eschatological mystery.”⁶⁹ Therefore, whoever has ears to hear and eyes to see, per the familiar passage, will connect or integrate the original historical meaning of the Old Testament to Jesus Christ and his salvation, which completes the hermeneutical unity and noetic understanding of the Bible.

And he said to them, “Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” And he said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.” (Mark 4.21-25)

According to Hays, this passage teaches Mark’s and Jesus’ hermeneutical approach to understanding the Scriptures.⁷⁰ The call is to “measure generously in interpreting the word” because “still more rewards follow.”⁷¹ In other words, the call is to hear or integrate the scriptural echoes and concealed notes of Jesus Christ and his salvation in an Old Testament text. Failure to do so results in becoming a “stingy hearer who hears only the literal surface sense” and in “diminishing returns, leading finally to nothing but impoverishment.”⁷²

Therefore, Mark reads Scripture Christocentrically, but in an indirect and allusive manner, “giving just enough clues to tease the reader into further exploration and

69. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 350.

70. *Ibid.*, 101.

71. *Ibid.*

72. *Ibid.*

reflection.”⁷³ Whereas Matthew reads Scripture openly by illuminating clear connections between the Old Testament and Jesus Christ and his salvation, Mark reads Scripture mysteriously by unearthing clues and artifacts in the Old Testament and then holds out a shovel for the reader to continue the excavation.

Reading a Dramatic Scripture with Luke. Luke’s voice is the dramatic storyteller. He unfolds the story of promise through Israel’s history toward its fulfillment in the story of Jesus Christ. Per Hays, “Luke’s hermeneutical strategy, then, is to re-narrate the story of Israel in such a way that the story of Jesus and the church can confidently be recognized as the fulfillment of the divine plan of salvation, for Israel and for the whole world.”⁷⁴ Luke’s extended citation of Isaiah 4:3-5 demonstrates his pattern of reading Israel’s story as coming to a dramatic conclusion in Jesus Christ and his salvation.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’” (Luke 3:4-6)

The original historical meaning of Isaiah 4:3-5 is the announcement of the good news that Israel’s exile is coming to an end by the victorious march of the Lord of Israel. Luke reads Isaiah 4.3-5 by integrating the original historical meaning with its ultimate meaning in Jesus Christ and his salvation. Therefore, Luke completes the meaning of Isaiah 4.3-5 in the revelatory arrival of Jesus Christ. As well, Jesus’ arrival signals the end of Israel’s exile, as the Lord of Israel who leads Israel victoriously out of exile in Isaiah is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. For Luke, Jesus is the end of

73. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 98.

74. *Ibid.*, 353.

Israel's exile because the Lord himself has come to deliver God's people from the ultimate exile, to which the original historical exile always pointed. This example of Luke's narrative art inspired Hays' words:

Luke is above all a storyteller . . . the story he tells has the character of a dramatic epic . . . sweeping in scope and measured in pace. The story's overall message finally emerges with lucidity, but Luke takes his time in allowing the plot to unfold on a grand scale. . . . Luke's narrative is symphonic. It develops long melody lines, plays variations upon them in multiple movements, but finally brings them all together as part of a unified artistic plan—a plan whose composer, Luke insists, is God.⁷⁵

Reading Scripture Backwards with John. John's voice is an explicit call to read backwards through the lens of Jesus Christ and his salvation to ultimately understand the Old Testament Scriptures (John 5:39-47). John sees the Old Testament Scriptures as containing divinely embedded signifiers that prefigure Jesus Christ and his salvation. These signifiers carry a surplus of meaning that only come to light retrospectively through the final revelatory lens of Jesus Christ and his salvation. John builds his hermeneutical case early by recording Philip's words to Nathanael: "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (Jn 1:45).

Why does John explicitly state and employ a retrospective hermeneutic for the Scriptures?⁷⁶ John's answer is hermeneutically cosmic. Jesus Christ is God incarnate (Jn 1:14), that is, the eternal "Word" of God (Jn 1:1-3). In other words, Jesus Christ is the ultimate eternal verbal action, speech act, or "Word" of God (Jn 1:1-3). Therefore, all the verbal actions of God performed and recorded in redemptive history are inherently

⁷⁵ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 275.

⁷⁶ John 1:45 and John 5:39-47.

Christ-centered and laced with traces of Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God. Hays explains John's *Logos* logic this way:

All this works hermeneutically because, at the beginning and the end of the day, Jesus is the *Logos*, the Word present before creation. All creation breathes with *his* life. He is the divine Wisdom whose very being is the blueprint of all reality. For John the Evangelist, therefore, all of Israel's Scripture is a figural web woven with latent prefigurations of the One without whom not one thing came into being.⁷⁷

Therefore, John understands the Old Testament Scriptures to be a "huge web of Christological signifiers generated by the pretemporal eternal logos as intimations of his truth and glory."⁷⁸ This means that although the "huge web of Christological signifiers" are present in the Old Testament Scriptures, they are not readily seen, understood, or embraced apart from the final revelatory light of Jesus Christ and his salvation (Jn 5:39-47). Reading backwards for John is not only hermeneutically logical because Jesus is the eternal Word of God, but it is also hermeneutically necessary because Jesus is the eternal Word of God become flesh.

Reading Scripture with the Apostle Paul

The Apostle Paul not only decided to build his life and ministry around "Jesus Christ and him crucified," but also commends "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2) as the only way to remove the hermeneutical and existential veil that covers every human heart. In 2 Cor. 3, Paul asserts that the original historical meaning of the Old Testament is not enough around which to build a life, church, and ministry. In fact, if

77. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 344.

78. *Ibid.*, 343.

lives, churches, and ministries are restricted to the original historical teaching of the Old Testament alone, then a ministry of condemnation and death is perpetuated (2 Cor 3:9, 7).

The Hermeneutical Veil. The hermeneutical veil is a textual blindness to the “eschatological glory” in the old covenant/Moses, which is Christ.⁷⁹ The Old Testament Scriptures (old covenant/Moses) are incomplete apart from Jesus Christ and his salvation (new covenant/the Spirit). Therefore, to treat the Old Testament Scriptures as complete revelation, as if the original historical meaning were enough to understand accurately and apply the Bible, is to perpetuate the hermeneutical veil: “For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away (2 Cor 3:14).”

Paul Barnett explains that Paul himself “sat in the synagogue Sabbath after Sabbath listening to the reading of the old covenant/Moses, but blinded to its glory, which pointed toward Christ. Moreover, as a Christian, he had preached Christ in the synagogues, explaining how the Scriptures (i.e., the Law and the Prophets—cf. Luke 24:44-46) had been fulfilled by the Messiah Jesus (Acts 13:15; 17:2-3), only to be faced with the obduracy of his hearers.”⁸⁰ Therefore, according to the Apostle Paul, reading the Old Testament Scriptures in light of the final and full revelation of Jesus Christ and his salvation is the only way to lift the hermeneutical veil—“only through Christ is it taken away” (2 Cor. 3.14).

79. Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 195.

80. *Ibid.*, 193-194.

The Existential Veil. The existential veil is a metaphor for the spiritual blindness that “lies over [human] hearts” (2 Cor. 3:15) and hardens minds (2 Cor. 3:14) to Jesus Christ and his salvation. Biblically and theologically, the existential veil is part of original sin. The hermeneutical veil points to mishandling the Bible by not integrating the Old Testament Scriptures to their ultimate climax in Jesus Christ and his salvation. The existential veil points to mishandling one’s life by not understanding and relying upon Jesus Christ and his salvation. Therefore, in terms of functional Bible reading and communication, the existential veil contributes to the hermeneutical veil (2 Cor. 3:14-16) by relying exclusively upon the Old Testament’s original historical meaning.

Who Will Remove the Veil? Who will deliver mankind from hermeneutical and existential blindness? The answer, according to the Apostle Paul, is the good news of hermeneutical and existential freedom in Jesus Christ: “But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:16-17).⁸¹ Barnett expounds, “Paul is saying, in effect, that only as Israelites turn to Christ, on the basis of the preaching of the gospel, will they discern the inner meaning and glory of the old covenant. Apart from Christ those who remain under that covenant remain veiled to the eschatological glory to which it pointed.”⁸²

Reading Scripture with the Apostle Paul means discovering the hermeneutical arc between the original historical meaning of an Old Testament passage (i.e., the old covenant/Moses) and the final and full revelatory meaning of Jesus Christ and his salvation (i.e., the new covenant/the Spirit). Every Old Testament passage can be

81. Hermeneutical and existential justification is followed by ongoing hermeneutical and existential sanctification.

82. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 195.

integrated with or connected to the “surpassing glory” of the overall message of the Bible (2 Cor 3:10), the climax of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ.

Every Old Testament passage or speech act reveals a facet of Jesus Christ and his salvation to reach and renew hearts. Building a life, church, and ministry only around the Old Testament’s original historical meaning and intention is living under a hermeneutical and existential veil (2 Cor 3:7, 9). Building a life, church, and ministry around “Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2), however, is freedom. It is participating in personal and corporate gospel renewal or “being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:17-18).

The New Testament Authors Conclusion

How did Jesus and the New Testament writers read the Bible? The answer is they read the Scriptures retrospectively through the final revelatory lens of Jesus Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. The revelatory act of Jesus Christ and his resurrection changed everything, including how to read the Bible.

Therefore, there are now two historical revelatory poles to embrace when reading, applying, and communicating the Bible: Pole 1 is the textual pole of the original historical meaning of a given passage, and Pole 2 is the contextual pole of Jesus Christ and his salvation. The semantic force of meaning flows both ways between the poles. The original historical meaning of a given passage (Pole 1) gives a pattern of significance to Jesus Christ and his salvation (Pole 2). Jesus Christ and his salvation (Pole 2) involves, fulfills, escalates, corresponds to, and completes all previous revelation in its historically partial or incomplete form (Pole 1). Therefore, a Gospel Arc is formed between the two poles.

One reads both forwards and backwards along the Gospel Arc—forward from the biblical text to Jesus Christ and his salvation by discovering and following the divinely embedded gospel threads in the text that give Jesus Christ and his salvation a pattern of significance; and backwards from Jesus Christ and his salvation to the biblical text by looking through the lens of the gospel in order to reinterpret or to map more meaning onto the original historical meaning. This Gospel Arc is the way the New Testament writers teach us to read, apply, and communicate the Bible. Therefore, as Hays explicates, they are calling today's readers to

retrain our sensibilities as readers and . . . reshape our perception of what is real. If we learn from them how to read, we will approach the reading of Scripture with a heightened awareness of story, metaphor, prefiguration, allusion, echo, reversal, and irony. To read Scripture well we must bid farewell to plodding literalism and rationalism in order to embrace a complex poetic sensibility. The Gospel writers are trying to teach us to become more interesting people—by teaching us to be more interesting readers.⁸³

Chapter Conclusion

The biblical and theological foundations for the Gospel Arc preaching model encompass the verbal power or divine speech act of Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture. In other words, Jesus Christ and his salvation comprise the ultimate subject (speech) and intent (act) in all of Scripture to be personally and corporately experienced in a living encounter.

Therefore, Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture were first explored by highlighting the apostolic practice of reading Scripture for gospel renewal. Second, Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture were explored by considering how gospel renewal sanctifies contemporary reading of the Bible. Third, Jesus Christ and his

83. Hayes, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 360.

salvation in all of Scripture were explored by wrestling with the tension of authorial intent in the Bible. Finally, Jesus Christ and his salvation in all of Scripture were explored by reading the Bible with Jesus and the New Testament writers. To sum these explorations, the Bible requires a bi-directional reading: 1) to discover the original historical meaning of a text, and 2) to integrate the original historical meaning of the text into the ultimate revelatory message of the Bible, Jesus Christ, and his salvation.

CHAPTER THREE

Method

Introduction

There is a need for a preaching model that helps preachers experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation with the biblical text while preparing (crafting) and proclaiming (delivering) the sermon, resulting in gospel renewal. Again, those who preach with him in view, encounter him anew. The purpose of this project is to help preachers experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) with the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon by implementing the Gospel Arc preaching model.

Description of Intervention

This project introduces the Gospel Arc preaching model to help preachers experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) with the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon. The project will implement the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention with two mixed components: 1) a quantitative pre- and post-survey (see Appendix A), and 2) the qualitative components of training local pastors in the Gospel Arc preaching model, implementing them in the participants' own preaching contexts for three weeks in close succession, and keeping a weekly guided journal during the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention. The purpose of the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention will be to determine the effect that the Gospel Arc preaching model has on the preacher's experience of a living encounter with

Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) with the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon.

Employing a Pre- and Post-Intervention Test for the Gospel Arc Preaching Model Intervention

The pre- and post-intervention test will involve employing a survey before and after the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention to help secure a point of measurement more resistant to unintentional bias. The survey will focus on two areas involving fourteen questions: 1) the skill dimension of sermon preparation, and 2) the experience dimension of sermon preparation and proclamation. The response options will be according to an agree scale: strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree, and strongly agree.

Training in the Gospel Arc Preaching Model Intervention

Training in the Gospel Arc preaching model will involve one three-hour session with local participant pastors. The Gospel Arc preaching model consists of: 1) discovering Pole 1 of the Gospel Arc preaching model, 2) connecting or integrating Pole 1 to Pole 2 of the Gospel Arc preaching model, 3) crafting the specific Gospel Arc in the text into a strong statement or vivid image, and 4) crafting a Gospel Arc sermon that is clear to the mind and real to the heart.

Discovering Pole 1 of the Gospel Arc Preaching Model. Pole 1 of the Gospel Arc preaching model is the original historical meaning of the biblical text. In other words, Pole 1 is the message of the text or what the passage is saying (the Big Idea of the text) and doing (the Applied Big Idea of the text) in its original historical context. The aim of

Pole 1 of the Gospel Arc preaching model is to discover the original historical meaning of the biblical text by 1) listening to the text, 2) understanding the text, and 3) discovering the message of the text.

The aim of listening to the text is to listen to God in and with the text. Practically, this means reading the text at least three times. Each reading is a time to luxuriate in the text, a time to engage the text in a slow, gentle reading with fresh eyes and an expectant ear. Fred Craddock encourages a “spontaneous, even naïve engagement with the text.”¹ Listening to the text is learning to listen, think, feel, see, imagine, encounter, and ask questions of the text in the presence of God.

The first reading is listening for oneself. This is a time to soak the soul in the text. In other words, become an “intelligent mystic”² who encounters God with the text and not apart from it. The second reading is listening to the world of the text. This is a time to enter the life of the text. In other words, become a time traveler who walks the textual terrain rather than seeking to interpret it from afar. The third reading is listening for others. This is a time to love others with the text. In other words, become a physician of the soul who listens on behalf of the multiform needs, conditions, and burdens of others. For example, how would a divorced single parent, irreligious person, or someone struggling with same sex desires hear this text?

After “listening to the text,” seek to understand the text by employing two tools: a Textual Map, and a Running Commentary. The Textual Map itemizes main and supporting ideas by paying attention to the literary flow of the text. It can be as simple as

1. Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 105.

2. John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 169.

outlining main ideas with supporting ideas, but it is significant because it creates a visual map of the text.

The Running Commentary fills in and fills up the Textual Map by answering the significant literary, historical, and theological questions in the text. For example, it will give special attention to significant:

1. Words
2. Ideas
3. Repetitions
4. Connector words
5. Images
6. Allusions and quotes from other places in the Bible
7. Characters and dialogue
8. Scenes and places
9. Actions and events
10. Historical background
11. The unexpected, unusual, surprises, out of place details, and questions that provoke one in the text—all great places for the deepest meaning to hide.

The Running Commentary is also where the preacher blends personally discovered insights with the insights of others or study aids.³ The Running Commentary is significant because it forces an interpretation of the text.

After “understanding the text,” discover the message of the text. The message of the text is informed by three interpretive textual tracks that mutually inform each other:

1. The specific aspect of the human condition being addressed in the text.

3. Study aids are encouraged once the preacher has put some “sweat equity” in the text.

2. The dominate thing the text is saying or a Big Idea of the text.
3. The dominate thing the text is doing with what it is saying or an Applied Big Idea of the text.

Therefore, the message of the text is discovered by blending these three interpretive textual tracks together to form one strong statement or vivid image.⁴ For clarity purposes, however, it is initially better to record and work with each of the three interpretive textual tracks separately, thereby crafting a strong statement or vivid image for each:

1. The specific aspect of the human condition being addressed in the text.
2. The dominate thing the text is saying or a Big Idea of the text.
3. The dominate thing the text is doing with what it is saying or an Applied Big Idea of the text.

To discover the specific facet of the human condition being addressed in the text, it is helpful to answer one or more of the following questions of the text:

1. What is the “mental map” or “heart map” of the individual people and/or corporate people (culture) in the text?
2. What is the universal human need, burden, condition, or conflict in or behind the text?
3. Who are the people or what are the places in view in the text?
4. What is the universal human condition of the participants and/or hearers being addressed?
5. What required the writing of this text?
6. Why might the Holy Spirit have inspired the text?
7. What is the universal human need, burden, condition, or conflict in the text that requires the grace of Jesus Christ and his salvation?

4. The sermon Big Idea and Applied Big Idea will be crafted from the text’s Big Idea and Applied Big Idea. They can either be blended together into a sticky statement, vivid image, or suspenseful question, or separated so that one leads the sermon while the other stands off stage until its anticipated appearance in the sermon.

Record answers in strong statements or vivid images.

To discover a Big Idea of the text, it is helpful to answer at least one of the following questions of the text:

1. What is one powerful thing the text is saying?
2. What is a dominant thought, idea, image, story, need, “Aha!” moment, subject, theme, or content in the text?
3. What is the freshly squeezed essence of the text?

Record answers in strong statements or vivid images.

To discover an Applied Big Idea of the text, it is helpful to answer one or more of the following questions of the text:

1. What is one powerful thing the text is doing with what it is saying?
2. Where is the passage going?
3. Where is the passage taking the reader?
4. What is the force, function, movement, intention, action, practical difference, or transformative possibility of the controlling content?

Record answers in strong statements or vivid images.

Further resources to help discover the three interpretive textual tracks can be found in the literary form of the text. For example:

1. If the text is narrative literature or a story, then discover how the setting, characters, conflict or plot line, and resolution or lack thereof communicate the three interpretive textual tracks.
2. If the text is propositional literature or a logical argument, then discover how the flow of the main and supporting ideas communicate the three interpretive textual tracks.
3. If the text is law or an ethical principle, then discover how the ideal or anti-ideal communicate the three interpretive textual tracks.

4. If the text is wisdom literature, then discover how the “fabric of creation” (i.e., the regular patterns or order of creation) or the “futility of creation” (i.e., the irregular patterns that hide and confuse the reality of God’s order because of sin) communicates the three interpretive textual tracks.
5. If the text is poetic literature, then discover how the image that brings the world of proposition and the world of sensory experience together communicates the three interpretive textual tracks.
6. If the text is apocalyptic literature, then discover how the visual revelation (rather than aural) communicates the three interpretive textual tracks.

In sum, Pole 1 is the first component of the Gospel Arc preaching model. It is the original historical meaning of the biblical text. It is the text’s message or what the passage is saying (Big Idea) and doing (Applied Big Idea) in its original historical context. The aim of Pole 1 is to discover the original historical meaning of the biblical text by: 1) listening to the text, 2) understanding the text, and 3) discovering the message of the text. Discovering the message of the text involves three interpretive textual tracks that mutually inform each other: 1) the specific human condition revealed in the text, 2) the Big Idea or what the text is saying, 3) and the Applied Big Idea or what the text is doing with what it is saying. The final product for Pole 1 of the Gospel Arc preaching model is three strong statements or vivid images, one for each of the following:

1. The specific aspect of the human condition being addressed in the text.
2. The primary thing the text is saying or the Big Idea of the text.
3. The primary thing the text is doing with what it is saying or the Applied Big Idea of the text.

Integrating Pole 1 to Pole 2 of the Gospel Arc Preaching Model. Pole 2 is the second component of the Gospel Arc preaching model. Pole 2 is Jesus Christ and his salvation, which is the ultimate revelatory lens for reading the Bible, the climax of God’s

revelation, the ultimate message of the Bible, the redemptive-historical meaning of the original historical text, and the ultimate message of a specific text to reach and renew lives.

Pole 2 changes everything, including how to read the Bible. Pole 2 retrospectively rereads, re-narrates, or reinterprets all previous revelation. Pole 2 involves, fulfills, escalates, corresponds to, completes, addresses, satisfies, perfects, resolves, or maps more meaning onto all previous revelation. Therefore, a biblical text has not been properly understood, applied, or communicated until its message (Pole 1) has been integrated with the overall message of the Bible culminating in Jesus Christ and his salvation (Pole 2).

The aim of connecting or integrating Pole 1 to Pole 2 of the Gospel Arc preaching model is to craft a specific Gospel Arc from the text, around which to build a sermon to reach and renew lives, homes, places, communities, and the surrounding culture. In other words, the aim is to re-present Jesus Christ and his salvation according to the specific way revealed in the text to transform the world (Rom 1:16).

There are two ways to connect or integrate the text (Pole 1) to Jesus Christ and his salvation (Pole 2), and the meaning flows both ways:

1. Read forward from the text to Jesus Christ and his salvation.
2. Read backwards from Jesus Christ and his salvation to the text.

The key to reading forward is finding and following the gospel thread(s) in the text that lead to Jesus Christ and his salvation. A gospel thread not only signifies itself in the text but also signifies Jesus Christ and his salvation. Therefore, a gospel thread is loaded with a surplus of meaning beyond its original historical meaning. Discovering the gospel thread(s) in the text connects the text (Pole 1) to Jesus Christ and his salvation

(Pole 2). How does one discover the gospel threads in the text? There are many biblical ways to find potential gospel threads in a text.⁵ The Gospel Arc preaching model encourages discovering and following these potential gospel threads to their ultimate example or embodiment in Jesus Christ and his salvation:

1. An attribute and/or action of God in the text that is addressing the universal human condition, need, or burden in the text.
2. A theme or idea in the text.
3. A law or biblical ethic in the text.
4. An image in the text.
5. A type or symbol in the text.
6. A story of an individual or community in the text.
7. An instinct or sense in the text.
8. A sin and its consequences, a heart and life issue, a cultural heart and life issue, a spiritual need, a universal human “hole,” condition, burden, and problem in the text.
9. The universal human longing in the text.
10. The functional human trust, hope, love, worship, salvation, justification, or God-replacement in the text.
11. The grace at work in the text.

In sum, reading forward is following a gospel thread in the text to its ultimate end (or *telos*) in Jesus Christ and his salvation. Pole 1 gives a pattern of significance to Jesus Christ and his salvation in the text.

5. Some helpful Christocentric preaching resources to discover potential gospel threads in the text are: Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*; Graeme Goldsworthy's, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*; Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*; Tim Keller, *Preaching and Center Church*; Gary Miller and Phil Campbell, *Saving Eutychus: How to Preach God's Word and Keep People Awake*.

The key to reading backwards is looking through the ultimate revelatory lens of Jesus Christ and his salvation (a gospel lens) to see or interpret the text in its new revelatory light. It is important to remember that Pole 2 is not disconnected from the original historical meaning of the text.⁶ Rather, it is the ultimate historical and redemptive context and meaning of the text. Therefore, Pole 2 completes the Gospel ARC preaching model hermeneutically, biblically-theologically, and homiletically.

How does one look through the gospel lens of Jesus Christ and his salvation to re-interpret the text? There are many ways to look through a gospel lens to see the text.⁷ The Gospel Arc suggests looking through the gospel lens to re-interpret the text by seeing how Jesus Christ and his salvation:

1. Address the universal human need, condition, or burden in the text.
2. Solve tensions in the text.
3. Accomplish what the text is doing (i.e., the ultimate application of the text).
4. Involve, correspond to, map more meaning onto, fulfill, escalate, or complete the signifiers (gospel threads) in the text.
5. Interpret the Old Testament allusions, echoes, or quotations in the New Testament text.
6. Provide the source or ultimate work of grace in the text.

6. The human author only view (liberal view), the divine author only view (allegorical view), and the divinely-inspired human author only view (evangelical view) of biblical authorship and authorial intent do not connect the original historical meaning of a biblical text to Jesus Christ and his salvation to enable the reader to understand, apply, and communicate the biblical text.

7. Helpful Christocentric preaching resources for looking through a gospel lens to retrospectively re-interpret the text are Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* and *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*.

Reading backwards is looking through the divinely provided revelatory lens of the gospel (Pole 2) to understand, apply, and communicate the biblical text (Pole 1). Pole 2 maps more meaning onto, completes, or reinterprets Pole 1.

In sum, Pole 2 is the second component of the Gospel Arc preaching model, the ultimate revelation of Jesus Christ and his salvation. Jesus Christ and his salvation change everything, including how to read the Bible. Therefore, a biblical text has not been accurately understood, applied, and communicated until it has been integrated with the overall gospel message of the Bible, Jesus Christ, and his salvation.

Therefore, Pole 1 (the text) must be connected to Pole 2 (the ultimate context). This is accomplished by reading forward from the text (Pole 1) to Jesus Christ and his salvation (Pole 2) and by reading backwards from Jesus Christ and his salvation (Pole 2) to the text (Pole 1). In so doing, Pole 1 provides a pattern of significance to Jesus Christ and his salvation from the text, and Pole 2 re-interprets or maps more meaning onto the text.

Once the connection between Pole 1 and Pole 2 has been made, the preacher can now craft a specific textual Gospel Arc into a strong statement or vivid image. The sermon then is built around this Gospel Arc statement or image to reach and renew lives, homes, places, communities, and the surrounding culture.

Craft the Specific Gospel Arc in the Text. At this point in the Gospel Arc preaching model, Pole 1 and Pole 2 have been established. The original historical meaning of the text has been interpreted and recorded into three strong statements or vivid images concerning: 1) the specific universal human condition addressed in the text, 2) the primary thing the text is saying (the text's Big Idea), and 3) the primary thing the

text is doing with what it is saying (the text's Applied Big Idea). A connection has been made between the original historical meaning of the text and Jesus Christ and his salvation or the ultimate meaning of the text. The connection was made by reading forward from the text to Jesus Christ and his salvation and by reading backwards from Jesus Christ and his salvation to the text. Therefore, the two poles of the Gospel Arc preaching model have been established, leaving only the Gospel Arc itself to be made.

Think of Pole 1 and Pole 2 as lumps of clay needing to be crafted into something beautiful called the Gospel Arc. Practically, this means taking the two lumps of clay (Pole 1 and Pole 2) and crafting one specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation from the text into either a strong statement or vivid image.

The freshly crafted Gospel Arc is the specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation revealed in the text and therefore re-presents Jesus Christ and his salvation from the text to reach and renew lives. The sermon now is built around this freshly crafted Gospel Arc.

Crafting a Gospel Arc Sermon. Once the text's original historical message (Pole 1) and the ultimate message of Jesus Christ and his salvation (Pole 2) have been specifically connected or arced into a strong statement or vivid image (the Gospel Arc), it is time to craft a Gospel Arc sermon. A Gospel Arc sermon is built around re-presenting Jesus Christ and his salvation according to the specific way revealed in the text (i.e., the Gospel Arc). This is done in a way that is both clear to the mind and real to the heart. Crafting a Gospel Arc sermon is the fourth component of the Gospel Arc preaching model and involves three major movements: 1) crafting the sermon message, 2) building a sermon map in oral form, and 3) participating in the divine event of preaching.

The sermon should say and do one powerful thing, not many things. Certainly, there are supporting ideas and running applications throughout the sermon. These, however, should support one powerful sermon message, not pull in several directions at once. How does one craft a single powerful sermon message? There are many ways to do this, as the plethora of preaching books demonstrate. The Gospel Arc preaching model approaches crafting a sermon message around five interpretive textual tracks that mutually inform each other:

1. The recorded strong statement or vivid image for the text's Big Idea or the primary thing the passage is saying.
2. The recorded strong statement or vivid image for the text's Applied Big Idea or the primary thing the passage is doing with what it is saying.
3. The recorded strong statement or vivid image for the universal human condition being specifically addressed in the text.
4. The recorded strong statement or vivid image for the Gospel Arc or the specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation revealed in the text.
5. The new consideration of the specific human and/or cultural needs of one's hearers.

These four textual interpretive tracks plus the new local listening track must converge or blend into one sermon message. The Gospel Arc preaching model prefers three approaches to accomplish this:

1. Blend them all together into one sticky statement, vivid image, or suspenseful question to craft the sermon message. Whether blended together into one sticky statement, vivid image, or suspenseful question, the individual tracks then become the key supporting ideas or movements of the sermon.
2. Lead with one track while the other tracks stand off stage waiting to make key appearances during the event of the sermon. In other words, the lead track rules them all by becoming the sermon message while the other tracks play key supporting roles as needed.

3. Follow a narrative form that places the individual tracks into the plot line of one ultimate over-arching story or sermon message.

Once the sermon message has been crafted, build everything around it. The Sermon Map is the answer to, “How can my listeners best hear the sermon message?” or “How do I unleash the sermon message upon my hearers?” The aim of preaching is to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation within the text to transform lives, homes, places, communities, and the surrounding culture. In other words, the aim of preaching is gospel renewal. Therefore, the sermon map should best support this aim. Generally, the various textual literary forms provide effective sermon maps. Once again, however, preaching resources are plenty for effective sermon maps or structures to deliver the sermon message.

Furthermore, the sermon is not a literary product to be read but an oral message to be heard and experienced. Therefore, whatever sermon map is employed should follow an oral form rather than a literary one. In other words, natural scripting should always prevail over what English teachers taught, though the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Preaching is a divine event in which the preacher participates. Therefore, both the preacher and hearers should dress appropriately—adorned with crash helmets and fastened seat belts. The aim of preaching for both the preacher and the hearer is to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation, resulting in change-on-the-spot or gospel renewal. Therefore, for the preacher, gospel renewal begins with preparation and continues with proclamation, or by experiencing the text in preparation and then re-experiencing the text in proclamation.

Understanding preaching as both a divine event and gospel renewal should re-energize the preparation and proclamation of the preacher. The preacher is now free to expect God to reach and renew people in sermon preparation and proclamation. The preacher is now free to participate in what God is already doing in sermon preparation and proclamation rather than be overburdened with trying to make something happen.

The Gospel Arc preaching model seeks to create space for the Holy Spirit to do his normal ordinary work of gospel renewal in preachers, homes, churches, places, communities, and the surrounding culture through the preparation and proclamation of all Scripture. Perhaps, the Gospel Arc preaching model's focus on creating space to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) with all of Scripture will help encourage a movement of preachers who preach good news rather than good advice, who are convinced there is divine life, power, and healing in knowing "nothing . . . except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2) in their preaching.

Implementing the Gospel Arc Preaching Model Intervention

Upon completion of the three-hour training in the Gospel Arc preaching model, participants will implement the model in their own preaching context for three weeks in close succession. Sermons will be preached from the biblical genres of narrative and epistolary. The first sermon must be drawn from one of the following New Testament passages: Romans 1:16-17; Romans 5:1-5; Galatians 1:6-10; Galatians 3:1-6; or Colossians 1:3-8. The second sermon must be drawn from one of the following Old Testament passages: Genesis 28:10-22; Exodus 12; Exodus 17:1-7; 1 Samuel 17; or 1 Kings 17:17-24. Finally, the third sermon must be drawn from one of the following

passages: Ezekiel 37; Daniel 3:8-30; Mark 4:35-41; John 5:39-47; Romans 12:1-2. The passage options are intended to gradually increase the level of textual care needed to discover the specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation revealed in the text.

A Gospel Arc preaching model manual will be provided to aid the three-week implementation of the Gospel Arc preaching model (see Appendix B). Furthermore, the amount of time necessary to implement the Gospel Arc preaching model each week should match the normal preaching preparation routine of the participant.

A Weekly Guided Journal During the Gospel Arc Preaching Model Intervention

Participants will keep a guided weekly journal during the three-week Gospel Arc preaching model intervention. The guided journal should be completed soon after the preaching event for a total of three entries. The guided journal will include responses to the following questions:

1. How would you describe your overall experience with the Gospel Arc preaching model this week for preparing (crafting) and proclaiming (delivery) your sermon?
2. While preparing your sermon this week, did the Gospel Arc preaching model help you identify and address a specific human condition, need, hole, or burden in the text? Please explain your answer.
3. What specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation was revealed in the text as the divine solution for the human need identified in the text? Describe your own personal interaction with this specific aspect of good news or grace in the text.
4. Did Jesus and his salvation become more clear or real to you this week beyond new or true information during your sermon preparation and/or delivery? If yes, please describe the experience.

Statement of Research Questions

The research for this intervention will be guided by one primary question: What effect did the Gospel Arc preaching model have on the preacher's experience of a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) within the biblical text while preparing (crafting) and proclaiming (delivering) the sermon?

Description of Method

I chose the qualitative method for exploring the effectiveness of this intervention. First and foremost, this project will explore the religious experiences of local pastors in Waco, Texas, during three weeks of sermon preparation and proclamation. Subjective discussions of whether or how one experienced a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) with the biblical text during sermon preparation and proclamation are better explored qualitatively.

Second, the qualitative method of research is better suited when the participants will experience the intervention in their natural setting. Participant pastors will implement the Gospel ARC preaching model in their own preaching context for three consecutive weeks, producing three sermons from three different texts within their regular routine of sermon preparation and proclamation.

Third, the qualitative method of research is better suited when the researcher is the key instrument for collecting data. In this project, I will be the only one collecting data from the participants. I will collect the data through a guided preaching manual and journal. I will use inductive data analysis to arrive at themes and patterns from the data. Therefore, I will be employing a process that is interpretive.

Role of the Researcher

I will employ a pre- and post-intervention test to help secure a point of measurement resistant to unintentional bias. I will lead the training session for local pastoral participants in the Gospel Arc preaching model prior to the intervention campaign. I will serve as the primary investigator of the intervention, personally gathering data from guided journal entries and assessing the findings.

The Sample

I will use a criterion-based purposive strategy for drawing the sample. Participants will be chosen based on the following criteria: 1) each participant will be a local pastor in Waco, Texas, 2) each participant will be unfamiliar with the Gospel Arc preaching model, and 3) each participant will implement the Gospel Arc preaching model in their own preaching context for three weeks in close succession, producing three sermons from three different texts.

I will enlist the Dean of Truett Theological Seminary, Truett Theological Seminary professors, and local pastors to recruit participants in the intervention. Participants will be invited into the intervention by means either of email, a telephone call, or a face-to-face invitation.

Entering the Field

I am the planter and pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church and, at the time of the intervention, have served as the church's senior minister for nineteen years. I will continue to perform my duties as senior minister during the intervention. I will receive permission from the Session of Redeemer Presbyterian Church to conduct the

intervention. A letter of support from the Session via the clerk of the Session will be included in this report (see Appendix C). I will facilitate a preliminary meeting of pastoral participants where I will explain the purpose and method of the intervention and will receive signed consent of participation from each participant (see Appendix D).

Data Collection

I will collect data from two mixed sources: 1) a quantitative pre- and post-intervention test to help secure a point of measurement more resistant to unintentional bias, 2) and a qualitative guided weekly journal during the three-week Gospel Arc preaching model intervention. The guided journal should be completed soon after the preaching event for a total of three entries. The guided journal entries will respond to the following questions:

1. How would you describe your overall experience with the Gospel Arc preaching model this week for preparing (crafting) and proclaiming (delivery) your sermon?
2. While preparing your sermon this week, did the Gospel Arc preaching model help you identify and address a specific human condition, need, hole, or burden in the text? Please explain your answer.
3. What specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation was revealed in the text as the divine solution for the human need identified in the text? Describe your own personal interaction with this specific aspect of good news or grace in the text.
4. Did Jesus and his salvation become more clear or real to you this week beyond new or true information during your sermon preparation and/or delivery? If yes, please describe the experience.

Data Analysis

I will analyze and assess the pre- and post-intervention surveys and the guided weekly journals of the participants. I will discuss emerging findings and tentative

interpretations with his faculty advisor, field advisor, research advisor, the director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Truett Theological Seminary, and other pastors.

Emerging findings and tentative interpretations will be analyzed and assessed at minimum by the following three intended outcome variables:

1. Did they experience some level of gospel renewal? In other words, did a moment in their sermon preparation and/or proclamation occur when Jesus Christ and his salvation became clearer to their mind and more real to their heart beyond new or true information? Did they experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation? The dynamic of gospel renewal could look like: 1) a spiritual impression consisting of listening and thinking in the presence of God (meditation and illumination); 2) adoration and a spiritual sense of God, his love, and the grace of Jesus Christ and his salvation (worship); 3) honesty and confession of sin before God or the doctrine of sin being experienced not just intellectually understood (repentance); 4) rest and reliance on Jesus Christ and his salvation (faith); 5) a different way of relating to others, an area of life, or life event (obedience); 6) the need of and petition for grace (petition); 7) communing prayer; 8) intercessory prayer or petitioning grace for others and other kingdom-centered prayers; or 9) other spiritual interactions with Jesus Christ and his salvation.
2. Did the participants identify and address a specific human condition, spiritual need, or burden in the text? If so, then space will have been created for the Holy Spirit to impress potentially upon them their own need of grace as identified in the text.
3. Did the participants discover and deliver a specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation in the text? If so, then space will have been created for the Holy Spirit to apply potentially Jesus Christ and his salvation as the solution to their own need of grace as identified in the text.

Reporting the Results

I will report the results of the acquired data in a Culminating Project Report, to be reviewed by the faculty advisor, the field advisor, the research advisor, and the director of the Doctor of Ministry program of Truett Theological Seminary.

Validity and Reliability

I will take great care to ensure that the results of the intervention will be reported accurately and with integrity. I will conduct a peer review during the intervention and data analysis by discussing emerging findings and tentative interpretations with my faculty advisor, field supervisor, research advisor, the director of the Doctor of Ministry program of Truett Theological Seminary, and other pastors.

I acknowledge certain biases that I will bring to the intervention and will critically reflect on said biases to ensure that they will not endanger the validity of the research. I admit the following biases: I expect the participants to experience personally some level of gospel renewal due to the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention. I expect the participants to grow in their ability to identify and address specific human conditions, needs, or burdens in the text during sermon preparation and proclamation due to the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention, creating space for the Holy Spirit to impress upon them their own need of grace. I expect the participants to grow in their ability to discover and deliver specific aspects of Jesus Christ and his salvation from the text during sermon preparation and proclamation due to the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention. Doing this will create space for the Holy Spirit to apply Jesus Christ and his salvation to their hearts and lives as the solution to their need of grace and as simply being beautiful to the “eyes of their heart” (Eph 1:18).

Ethical Issues Related to the Study

I will be mindful to protect the participants of the intervention. Confidentiality will be assured to all participants, and no participant will be coerced into participating in the intervention. Names will be changed to avoid a breach of confidentiality and/or

anonymity. The data collected from the guided weekly journals will be securely stored in my study at home for three years and then destroyed. All electronic data and analysis will be stored on a password-protected computer and destroyed in three years. All data will be accessible only to me. A statement of informed consent will be gathered from all participants (see Appendix D). I will gain the consent of the Institutional Review Board of Baylor University before proceeding with the intervention.

CHAPTER FOUR

Statement of Findings

Introduction

Once again, those who preach with him in view encounter him anew. There is a need for a preaching model that helps preachers experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation through the biblical text while preparing (crafting) and proclaiming (delivering) the sermon, resulting in gospel renewal. The purpose of this project was to help preachers experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) through the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon by implementing the Gospel Arc preaching model. The research for this intervention was guided by one primary question: What effect did the Gospel Arc preaching model have on the preacher's experience of a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation within the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon?

The project implemented the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention with two mixed components: 1) a quantitative pre- and post-survey (see Appendix A); and 2) the qualitative components of training local pastors in the Gospel Arc preaching model (see Appendix B), which entailed implementing the model in the participants' own preaching contexts for three weeks in close succession (see Appendix C) and keeping a weekly guided journal during the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention (see Appendix D).

A sample of seven participants was selected to evaluate the effectiveness of the Gospel Arc preaching model. The sample included seven local pastors in Waco, Texas,

who were unfamiliar with the Gospel Arc preaching model beforehand, and who had the ability to implement the Gospel Arc preaching model in their own preaching context for three weeks, producing three sermons from three different texts. These participants will be referred to with the pseudonyms: Bob, Mike, Jeff, Sam, Rex, Harris, and Dan.

Each participant took a pre-intervention survey, completed three-hours of training in the Gospel Arc preaching model, implemented the Gospel Arc preaching model by preparing and proclaiming three sermons from three different texts, and then concluded with a post-intervention survey. The data collected from the two surveys and the guided journals served as the foundation for the initial, primary, and secondary findings.

Initial Findings from the Pre-Intervention Survey

The pre-intervention survey focused a total of fourteen questions grouped in two categories: 1) the skill dimension of sermon preparation, and 2) the experience dimension of sermon preparation and proclamation. The response options were according to an agree scale: strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree, and strongly agree. See Appendix E for the complete results of the pre-intervention survey.

Initial Finding 1

The first initial finding was that the skill of intentionally listening to God in and with the text during sermon preparation was high among the participants. Seventy-one percent of the participants “agreed” to the practice of intentionally, setting aside time to listen to God in and with the text during their weekly sermon preparation. Twenty-nine percent of the participants “slightly agreed” to the practice, possibly highlighting unintentional occurrences as opposed to an intentional practice.

Initial Finding 2

The second initial finding was that the practice of intentionally addressing an aspect of the human condition in the text during sermon preparation was high among the participants. Forty-three percent of the participants “agreed,” and another twenty-nine percent “strongly agreed” to implementing this skill during sermon preparation. Fourteen percent of the participants “disagreed” to practicing this skill during sermon preparation, and the final fourteen percent “slightly disagreed” to practicing this skill during sermon preparation.

Initial Finding 3

The third initial finding was that the practice of intentionally discovering a redemptive aspect in the text during sermon preparation was high among the participants. This survey question had the highest mean (average) score (fifty percent). Forty-three percent of the participants “agreed,” and another twenty-nine percent “strongly agreed.” Twenty-nine percent of the participants “slightly agreed” to practicing this skill, possibly highlighting unintentional occurrences as opposed to an intentional practice.

The high percentage of participants practicing this sermon preparation skill is interesting given the average previous training of the participants in Christ-centered preaching was at thirty-six percent. Where did the intentional practice to identify a redemptive aspect in the text during sermon preparation come from among the participants?

The high percentage of participants practicing this sermon preparation skill, however, did not translate into an equally high percentage of participants practicing the

skill of building their sermons around the aspect of redemption discovered in the text. There was a discrepancy between the two practices. Seventy-two percent of the participants clearly indicated (forty-three percent “agreed” and twenty-nine percent “strongly agreed”) to the practice of discovering an aspect of redemption in the text during sermon preparation. Only forty-three percent, however, “agreed” to building their sermon around the redemptive truth they discovered. The mean difference for the participants in these two skills was fifty percent and forty-one percent respectively.

Initial Finding 4

The fourth initial finding was that God-centered experiences during sermon preparation were high among the participants. Eighty-six percent “agreed” to experiencing God during sermon preparation. No other survey question received this high a percentage from one response. Seventy-one percent of the participants reported regularly experiencing God’s love during sermon preparation (fifty-seven percent “agreed” and fourteen percent “strongly agreed”). Only one participant “slightly disagreed” to experiencing God’s love during sermon preparation. Furthermore, seventy-one percent of the participants “agreed” to communing with God in prayer during sermon preparation, while the remaining participants “slightly agreed” (twenty-nine percent).

Initial Finding 5

The fifth initial finding was that Christ-centered experiences during sermon preparation were lower than God-centered experiences among the participants. Christ-centered experiences were indicated by survey questions expressing the experience of human need, sin, present need for grace, and an explicit reliance upon Christ. God-

centered experiences were indicated by survey questions expressing general experiences of God, his love, and friendship through prayer (see above for these results).

Only twenty-nine percent of the participants “agreed” to experiencing an aspect of the human condition discovered in the text during sermon preparation, while fourteen percent “slightly agreed” and fifty-seven percent “slightly disagreed.” The mean score was thirty-seven percent. As for petitioning grace during sermon preparation, only twenty-nine percent “agreed,” and one participant “strongly agreed.” Furthermore, twenty-nine percent of participants indicated they did not confess sin during sermon preparation (twenty-nine percent “disagreed”), and just over half indicated they do (fifty-seven percent “agreed”). As for experiencing reliance upon Christ during sermon preparation, just over half again indicated they do (forty-three percent “agreed” and fourteen percent “strongly agreed”).

Initial Finding 6

The sixth initial finding was that experiencing an aspect of the human condition addressed in the text during sermon preparation was not experienced by many of the participants. As shown in Table 1, twenty-nine percent of the participants “agreed” to experiencing an aspect of the human condition or need discovered in the text during sermon preparation, and fifty-seven percent “slightly disagreed.” This lack of experience is interesting given the high percentage of participants who practiced the sermon preparation skill to intentionally identify an aspect of the human condition or need addressed in the text (seventy-two percent).

Table 1: The Human Condition in the Text
and the Human Condition Experienced

While preparing a sermon, I intentionally look for an aspect of the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) addressed in the text.		During my sermon preparation, I experience the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) addressed in the text.	
Strongly agree	29%	Strongly agree	0%
Agree	43%	Agree	29%
Slightly agree	0%	Slightly agree	14%
Slightly disagree	14%	Slightly disagree	57%
Disagree	14%	Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%	Strongly disagree	0%
Mean (average)	50%	Mean (average)	37%

Initial Finding 7

The seventh finding was that the experience of sermon preparation and proclamation as a burden was low among the participants. Eighty-six percent “disagreed” in some form that sermon preparation was a burden for them. Eighty-five percent “disagreed” in some form that sermon delivery was a burden for them. These high percentages correspond well to the high percentages for experiencing God during sermon preparation and delivery, thereby possibly accounting for the lack of burden in these two areas.

Primary Findings from the Guided Journals

The “Weekly Guided Journal” (see Appendix D) provided the primary qualitative means to collect data during the three-week Gospel Arc preaching model intervention. The guided journal was completed soon after each preaching event for a total of three entries. The participants preached a total of three sermons: 1) the first sermon from selected New Testament passages, 2) the second sermon from selected Old Testament

passages, and 3) a third sermon from a mixture of selected New and Old Testament passages (see Appendix C for the text selection list).

The guided journal entries responded to the following questions:

5. How would you describe your overall experience with the Gospel Arc preaching model this week for preparing (crafting) and proclaiming (delivery) your sermon?
6. While preparing your sermon this week, did the Gospel Arc preaching model help you identify and address a specific human condition, need, hole, or burden in the text? Please explain your answer.
7. What specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation was revealed in the text as the divine solution for the human need identified in the text? Describe your own personal interaction with this specific aspect of good news or grace in the text.
8. Did Jesus and his salvation become more clear or real to you this week beyond new or true information during your sermon preparation and/or delivery? If yes, please describe the experience.

Primary Finding 1

The first primary finding was that the Gospel Arc preaching model was a new approach to the biblical text for the participants. Working with the Gospel Arc the first week from Col. 1:3-8, Rex said, “It made me look at the text in a new way.” When asked about whether Jesus and his salvation became more clear or real to him this week beyond new or true information, he answered, “I do not think I could say Jesus became more clear or real to me.” He added, however, “But I can say that this method pushed me to analyze the text in a way I have not before.”

Working with the Gospel Arc the first week from Rom. 5:1-5, Bob said, “it gave me language and clearer vision to identify what I was experiencing in my own heart and the hearts of those I pastor.” The second week, he preached on Gen. 28:10-22, a passage he had already preached before, and indicated that he was “anxious to see how I would

approach it this time.” He concluded after revisiting Gen. 28:10-22 with the Gospel Arc preaching model: “The Gospel Arc made me keenly aware of the grace that permeated the entire passage and Jacob narrative. . . . This was different than the last time I preached this. I did not hit that idea near as much. I feel like the Arc helps you encounter the text more personally, then aids in how genuinely you can then express yourself in the sermon.”

Sam said his first experience with the Gospel Arc in Rom. 1:16-17 made it possible to “order my thoughts much better than I usually do. I was also able to structure my thinking more systematically rather than being scatter-brained.” The second week, he was in 1 Sam. 17 and said, “In crafting the sermon, I felt like I was able to go much more in depth with the original historical content than I would have otherwise. The Arc forced me to understand the holistic context of the passage and then to see Jesus in the text.” He also indicated that his interaction with 1 Sam. 17 was different in that, “If I had just stuck to the grammatical-historical approach, then I probably would have made this text about myself or my congregation. By that I mean that I probably would have told everyone (including myself) just to be more like David.”

Mike summarized his first experience with the Gospel Arc in Rom. 1:16-17 this way: “I really enjoyed it! It helped in preparation by giving me a definitive heading for making my outline. In delivery, I notice I stayed much more on point than normal and the transitions were smooth.” The second week in Exod. 17:1-7, he said, “Again, I have noticed this method keeping me on track in research, preparation, and delivery. Also, it is a wonderful tool for helping me see God’s presence and plan throughout Scripture.” The third week in Mark 4:35-41, he said, “It helped me see this story as the original readers

did. This resulted in a thorough exegesis of the text and a flowing delivery. I've noticed marked improvement in my sermonizing experience."

Harris said his first experience with the Gospel Arc in Col. 1:3-8 was "hard":

I have a specific way I write sermons and the Arc asked me to do it very differently. Thankfully, it was an easy passage to fit into the Arc. That being said, it took me longer than normal, but once I got into rhythm, it was enjoyable. The delivery was wonderful! I didn't change my style but (obviously) the content was different and I think the congregation took notice. I got A LOT of compliments after the service.

Dan said he also got off to a rough start with the Gospel Arc in Gal. 3:1-6: "Using the Arc was uncomfortable this week. It changed my routine and method of preparing sermons. I was not used to this new style, but began to warm up to it during my preparation." Describing his overall experience with the Gospel Arc the second week Dan said, "The overall experience was really good. This was a hard text (i.e. Ezekiel 37)! I felt like the Arc gave me skills I needed to get underneath the text to see it for more than it initially appeared." Working with the Gospel Arc the third week from Exodus 12 Dan said, "This week was much better. I feel like I was able to get a hang of the method and to begin to relax while I was using it. My delivery felt stronger too."

Primary Finding 2

The second primary finding was that the Gospel Arc preaching model helped the participants discover a specific human condition in the text. All the participants answered in the affirmative to guided journal question 2:

While preparing your sermon this week, did the Gospel Arc preaching model help you identify and address a specific human condition, need, hole, or burden in the text? Please explain your answer.

Many of the explanations of the participants were more general like: “human sin” from Rom. 1:16-17, “our sinfulness” from Rom. 5:1-5, “the desperate need of righteousness” from Rom. 1:16-17, “skepticism about truth” from Col. 3:1-8, “the need we have to hear the gospel initially” from Col. 1:3-8, “doubtfulness and unfaithfulness in times of need” from Exod. 17:1-7, “we are just like the Israelites” from Exod. 17:1-7, and “lack of trust” from Mark 4:35-41. Other explanations were more specific and textually targeted like: “humans have loves that are disordered” from Rom. 12:1-2, “even though we have seen God’s power and felt his hand on us, we still doubt when the storms of life close in” from Mark 4:35-41, “Do I really believe he is with me or not?” from Exod. 17:1-7, “the need to not be alone especially in times of crisis” from Dan. 3:8-30, “What do you do when life knocks the life out of you?” from Ezek. 37, “humans need someone or something greater than themselves to conquer their enemies” from 1 Sam. 17, “when the world is our maker our lives are a mess” from Rom. 12:1-2, “the human inability to perceive God’s presence despite his action” from Exod. 17:1-7, “it is difficult to see God’s presence or concern during life’s storms” from Mark 4:35-41, “is life worth living without hope?” from Col. 1:3-8, “we don’t know we are dead and we don’t know we can’t hear God” from Ezek. 1:37, “the human need for atonement and approval” from Exod. 12, and “our tendency to want to hurt others” from Gen. 28:10-22.

In week one while working with Rom. 5:1-5, Bob specifically expressed how the Gospel Arc helped him “identify the need by making me more aware of that being the target. Round 3 and the heart map helped with this, as well as Round 5 and the ‘sticky statement’ idea.” In week two, he explained what happened in Gen. 28:10-22:

I used the example of these IRS scams, where people call you and say you owe the IRS a lot of money, and how they need you to give them all your information

now. Those people are taking advantage of others, messing with people's lives to get ahead, and it makes us sick that someone would do that. You want to throw them in jail! And that is how we should feel about Jacob cheating Esau out of his blessing. And yet, Jacob is shocked by grace. This was different than the last time I preached this. I did not hit that idea near as much.

Working with Ezek. 37 in week three, Bob said, "the heart map brought to light the idea that the people were broken and hopeless. We get this way as well in life." Furthermore, he expressed how his church was "going through a lot of conflict and turnover" at the time, which made him hesitate in choosing this passage; however, he said, "I honestly felt I needed to hear it and our church did as well . . . The Gospel Arc Round 2 and 3 (i.e., discovering the original historical meaning and identifying the human condition respectively) helped with this."

Working with the Gospel Arc his first week in Gal. 3:1-6, Dan noted that the intentional identification of a specific aspect of the human condition in the text helped "find a way to the listeners relating to the text, rather than just re-explaining the text to them." Working with Ezek. 37 his third week, he said the whole sermon was built around the human condition in the text: "the need for life to be spoken back into us."

Primary Finding 3

The third primary finding was that the Gospel Arc preaching model helped the participants wrestle with connecting the text to a specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation revealed in the text. All the participants wrestled with connecting their weekly texts to Jesus Christ and his salvation. Some connections were more general like: "the gospel is always growing and bearing fruit" from Col. 1:3-8, "Jesus is always with us especially in times of crisis" from Dan. 3:8-30, and "through Christ, God repairs and redeems the world" from Rom. 1:16-17.

Other connections, however, dug more deeply into the text to discover a text-specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation. Working with Exod. 17:1-7, Jeff said, “God stops at nothing to be among us. The incarnation is not only proof of this but is proof of how far God will then go so we can be with him.” Working with Mark 4:35-41, Mike said, “Jesus Christ is our refuge in the storm. This is easy for me to preach but hard to model. However, I see Jesus as the Rock House of my youth—strong, tested, and reliable.” Working with Exod. 12, Dan connected the text to “Jesus’ sacrifice as the ultimate Passover for all of those who trust and believe in Him. This was good for me to hear because it gave me a sense of freedom to pursue God and to know that he pursued me.”

Beginning with Rom. 1:16-17 in week one, Sam connected the power of the gospel to a person: “Jesus comes into the world of the believer and gives them the ability to live by him and not by their idols. Humans need something to put their trust into. In delivering the gospel, Jesus gives us something to put ourselves into that won’t give out on us. In fact, that relationship is in itself power.” Continuing with 1 Sam. 17 the second week, he connected David’s victory to the better David saying, “Jesus is the ultimate representative of his people. It became clear to me in my study process that the purpose of the passage was that Jesus won the victory and we get to partake in his spoils of war. This realization relieved a great burden from me because I realized I was never meant to fight these battles in the first place.” Concluding with Rom. 12:1-2, he connected the text to Jesus as “the ultimate living sacrifice”: “Because of his sacrifice we are able to be holy and acceptable. It is important that this idea is not the other way around. Jesus sacrifice makes me able to sacrifice myself as well. For some reason, this notion feels less

burdensome than going the other way around. Starting with Jesus and then going to me makes the impact much more meaningful.”

Working with Exod. 17:1-7, Rex connected the text to Jesus’ power and provision: “In the same way that Moses struck the rock and water flowed out, Jesus was killed and living water flowed forth despite the sinfulness and unbelief.” In week three, he connected human fears in Mark 4.35-41 to “Jesus’ power and God’s sovereignty. Despite our fears, he has control; the only difference is how we respond. Will we respond with faith and love or doubt and fear?”

Working with Rom. 5:1-5 in his first week, Bob connected conflict (the opposite of the peace in Rom. 5) to Christ: “Our entire faith is based on conflict resolution . . . the peace Christ secured with God and others.” Working with Gen. 28:10-22 during his second week, he connected the undeserved and unexpected grace of God revealed in the text to the same “connection John makes with this passage, Jesus himself.” He stated, “Jesus himself is the new house of God. And in Jesus, we, like Jacob, have that promise of provision and presence. In our darkest hour when we’ve blown it, our undeserving God meets us there, and surprises us with grace.”

Concluding with Exod. 37, Bob said the Gospel Arc specifically helped him ask, “How can the house of Israel’s story be applied to our story, and the hope that this passage gives be applied to our hopelessness?” He wrestled with the potential gospel threads provided in Round 4 of the Gospel Arc and landed on this one: “The story of an individual or community in the text. Follow this gospel thread to its ultimate bigger story of Jesus Christ and his salvation.”

Working with Col. 1:3-8 in his first week, Harris connected the need for hope to “Jesus as the ‘Ultimate Hope.’ We now have hope to sustain life because Jesus is the Personification of hope, even the never-ending Supplier of hope.” Working with 1 Kings 17:17-24, he connected the text to Jesus’ resurrection: “Jesus resurrects . . . our hopes, dreams, goals, lost loves, the best part of us. He intercedes to God on our behalf. He shouts and screams to God and resurrects the best parts of us that have laid dormant in our hearts and souls for so long.”

Primary Finding 4

The fourth primary finding was that the Gospel Arc preaching model helped participants personally interact with a specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation in the text. Some participants communicated how the text impacted them in terms like: “I know Jesus is the truth but has the world crept in on me just a bit when I am satisfied with just enough truth instead of realizing all truth is there for accepting?” (from Col. 1:3-8); “Do I rely on the LORD being so much among us that I can reach out (strike) the rock of living water any time I want?” (from Exod. 17:1-7); “I cannot say he became more real, but I can claim that Hurricane Harvey and the related tragedies made this text more real. Coupled with this method, the meaning of the text makes a real impact” (from Mark 4:35-41).

Other participants expressed their engagement with Jesus and his salvation in the text in terms of a deeper awareness and fresh remembrance like: “I became more aware of God’s divine plan from the beginning and the way in which his story always points toward the Savior, even in the Old Testament” (from Exodus 17:1-7); “This text and method reinforced my faith by reminding me of God’s faithfulness” (from Rom. 1:16-

17); “No (to Jesus and his salvation becoming more clear or real to them), but it did reinforce my knowledge of his presence and faithfulness throughout history” (from Exod. 17:1-7).

Other participants zeroed in on Jesus and his salvation becoming more clear or real to them during the preparation process and the proclamation event. Working with Mark 4:35-41, Mike said, “The text helped me see God as a safe place during life’s storms. My tendency is to ‘spit into the wind’ but this reminded me that I have a refuge in the faithfulness, power, and person of Christ Jesus, my LORD.”

Working with Col. 1:3-8 the first week, Harris said, “I really internalized this message. The text changed how I understand hope. I now understand it as a vital part of life . . . and it is provided to us through Christ.” The second week, he was working with 1 Kings 17:17-24 and said, “SO MUCH MORE CLEAR. In my sermon, I noted that too often we let good things die in our hearts and minds. But this story reminds us that Christ came to resurrect the best, good, noble, right parts of us that we have left for dead.”

Working with Gen. 28:10-22 the second week, Bob said:

Yes, this passage became much more experiential. And I wanted the audience to confront their own sinfulness and need for grace as well. . . . The Gospel Arc made me keenly aware of the grace that permeated the entire passage and Jacob narrative. As with last week, I feel like the Arc helps you encounter the text more personally, which then aids in how genuinely you can then express yourself in the sermon.

Working with Ezek. 37 the third week, Bob connected personally to the “vivid image of the dry bones,” and “I feel like in my own life and in the life of the church, this passage gave me hope.”

Working with Gal. 3:1-6 the first week, Dan said, “Yes. I was able to interact with the sermon text in a way that it felt real to me.” From week two in Exod. 12, Dan said,

“Yes. I felt the power of the message as I was communicating it. I think that the people I was preaching too also felt the same way. The sermon felt much more powerful than something I could have forced to happen.” From week three in Ezek. 37, he said, “Yes. As I was studying I felt the layers of understanding kept getting uncovered and that I had an experience with the text that was both challenging and life-giving. Preaching the passage felt the same way.”

Working with Rom. 1:16-17 the first week, Sam said, “Yes. I felt a functional experience of the text as I was preaching. It became more real to me. It is not easy to describe, but I felt a deeper understanding as I preached.” From week two in 1 Sam. 17, he said:

If had just stuck to the grammatical-historical approach I probably would have made this text about myself or my congregation. By that I mean that I probably would have told everyone (including myself) just to be more like David. In trying to find the human condition and Jesus in the text I was able to see how this passage was really about Jesus and what he has done.

Secondary Findings from the Post-Intervention Survey

The post-intervention survey revisited the skill dimension of sermon preparation and the experience dimension of sermon preparation and proclamation. This time, however, it was done in consideration of implementing the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention. The response options were according to an agree scale: strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree, and strongly agree. See Appendix F for the complete results of the post-intervention survey.

Secondary Finding 1

The first of the secondary findings was that the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention further strengthened the participants' previously tested skill dimensions in sermon preparation. The following among these were high among the participants: 1) intentionally listening to God in and with the text, 2) looking for a specific aspect of the human condition in the text, and 3) looking for a specific aspect of redemption revealed in the text. The practice of intentionally listening to God in and with the text increased seven percent (from forty-seven to fifty-four percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention. Furthermore, participants who "strongly agreed" to practicing this skill in sermon preparation increased forty-three percent (from zero to forty-three percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention.

The practice of intentionally looking for an aspect of the human condition in the text increased thirteen percent (from forty-six to fifty-nine percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention. Furthermore, participants who "strongly agreed" to practicing this skill in sermon preparation increased fifty-seven percent (from twenty-nine to eighty-six percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention.

The practice of intentionally looking for an aspect of redemption revealed in the text increased three percent (from fifty to fifty-three percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention. Furthermore, participants who "agreed" to practicing this skill increased twenty-eight percent (from forty-three to seventy-one percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention, while those who "strongly agreed" stayed the same.

Secondary Finding 2

The second of the secondary findings was that the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention increased the participants' practice of structuring their sermon around an aspect of redemption revealed in the text. This practice increased twelve percent (from forty-one to fifty-three percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention. Furthermore, the gap between the participants' skill of identifying an aspect of redemption in the text and then structuring a sermon around that redemption disappeared, since both came in at fifty-three percent. Previously, the pre-intervention survey revealed a nine percent mean discrepancy between them, which indicated that the skill of identifying a redemptive aspect in the text did not translate into building the sermon around it.

Secondary Finding 3

The third of the secondary findings was that the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention increased the participant's experience of an aspect of the human condition addressed in the text. Previously, the pre-intervention survey revealed a higher skill than experience level of the human condition in the text—a discrepancy of nine percent (mean). The Gospel Arc intervention, however, revealed a fourteen percent increase in the participants' experience of the human condition in the text (from thirty-seven to fifty-one percent). The fifty-one percent (mean) experience level surpassed the forty-six percent pre-survey skill level for identifying the human condition in the text. Furthermore, the Gospel Arc intervention eliminated the high fifty-seven percent pre-survey level of "slightly disagreeing" to experiencing the human condition in the text. However, the skill level still exceeded the experience level of the human condition in the text by nine percent.

Table 2: The Human Condition in the Text
and the Human Condition Experienced

During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I intentionally looked for an aspect of the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) addressed in the text.		During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I experienced the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) addressed in the text.	
Strongly agree	86%	Strongly agree	29%
Agree	14%	Agree	57%
Slightly agree	0%	Slightly agree	14%
Slightly disagree	0%	Slightly disagree	0%
Disagree	0%	Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%	Strongly disagree	0%
Mean (average)	59%	Mean (average)	51%

Secondary Finding 4

The fourth of the secondary findings was that the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention further strengthened the participant's previously tested experience dimensions during sermon preparation. The following previously tested experiences in sermon preparation were high among the participants: 1) experiencing God, 2) feeling God's love, and 3) communing with God in prayer. Experiencing God in sermon preparation increased four percent (from forty-nine to fifty-three percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention. Furthermore, participants who "strongly agreed" to experiencing God during sermon preparation increased twenty-nine percent (from zero to twenty-nine percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention.

Feeling God's love in sermon preparation increased ten percent (from forty-seven to fifty-seven percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention. Significantly, participants who "strongly agreed" to experiencing God's love during sermon preparation increased fifty-seven percent (from fourteen to seventy-one percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention.

Communing with God in prayer in sermon preparation increased nine percent (from forty-seven to fifty-six percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention. Significantly, participants who “strongly agreed” to communing with God in prayer during sermon preparation increased fifty-one percent (from zero to fifty-one percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention.

Secondary Finding 5

The fifth of the secondary findings was that the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention increased the participants’ Christ-centered experience during sermon preparation. The following previously tested experiences in sermon preparation were low among the participants: 1) confessing sin, 2) petitioning the grace of God, and 3) reliance upon Christ. Confessing sin to God in sermon preparation increased nine percent (from forty to forty-nine percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention. Furthermore, participants who “disagreed” to confessing sin to God during sermon preparation (twenty-nine percent) fell to zero during the Gospel Arc intervention.

Asking for grace in sermon preparation increased fifteen percent (from thirty-six to fifty-three percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention. Significantly, participants who “agreed” and “strongly agreed” increased to a combined total of fifty-seven percent during the Gospel Arc intervention.

Reliance upon Christ in sermon preparation increased nine percent (from forty-seven to fifty-six percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention. Significantly, participants who “strongly agreed” increased fifty-seven percent (from fourteen to seventy-one percent) during the Gospel Arc intervention.

Chapter Conclusion

To reiterate, those who preach with him in view encounter him anew. The purpose of the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention was to help preachers experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) through the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon. The intervention employed two mixed components: 1) a quantitative pre- and post-survey (see Appendix A), and 2) the qualitative components of training local pastors in the Gospel Arc preaching model (see Appendix B), which entailed implementing the model in the participants' own preaching contexts for three weeks (see Appendix C) and keeping a weekly guided journal during the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention (see Appendix D).

The pre-intervention survey revealed the following initial findings: 1) the practice of intentionally listening to God in and with the text during sermon preparation was high among the participants, 2) the practice of intentionally addressing the human condition in the text during sermon preparation was high among the participants, 3) the practice of intentionally discovering a redemptive aspect in the text during sermon preparation was high among the participants, 4) God-centered experiences during sermon preparation were high among the participants, 5) Christ-centered experiences during sermon preparation were lower than God-centered experiences among the participants, 6) experiencing an aspect of the human condition addressed in the text during sermon preparation was not experienced by many of participants, and 7) the experience of sermon preparation and proclamation being a burden was low among the participants.

The weekly guided journal during the Gospel Arc intervention revealed the following primary findings: 1) the Gospel Arc preaching model was a new approach to the biblical text for the participants, 2) The Gospel Arc preaching model helped the participants discover a specific human condition in the text, 3) the Gospel Arc preaching model helped the participants wrestle with connecting the text to a specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation in the text, and 4) the Gospel Arc preaching model helped participants personally interact with a specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his Salvation in the text.

The post-intervention survey revealed the following initial findings: 1) the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention further strengthened the participants' previously tested skill dimensions in sermon preparation, 2) the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention increased the participants' practice of structuring their sermon around a particular aspect of redemption revealed in the text, 3) the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention increased the participants' experience of a particular aspect of the human condition addressed in the text, 4) the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention further strengthened the participants' previously tested experience dimensions in sermon preparation, and 5) the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention increased the participants' Christ-centered experience.

CHAPTER FIVE

Evaluation of the Project

Introduction

Once more, those who preach with him in view encounter him anew. Moralism, the default mode of the human heart, avoids both the view and encounter of Jesus Christ and his salvation in sermon preparation and proclamation. Therefore, there is a need for a preaching model that helps preachers experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation through the biblical text while preparing (crafting) and proclaiming (delivering) the sermon, resulting in gospel renewal. Responding to this need, the project's Gospel Arc preaching project was shown to help preachers experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) through the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon by: 1) pre-surveying local pastors in specific skill dimensions and experience dimensions of sermon preparation and proclamation, (2) training local pastors in the use of the Gospel Arc preaching model, 3) implementing the Gospel Arc preaching model in the participants' own preaching contexts for three weeks in close succession, 4) keeping a weekly guided journal during the Gospel Arc preaching project, and 5) post-surveying the same specific skill dimensions and experience dimensions of sermon preparation and proclamation during the Gospel Arc preaching project.

The inquiry into the effectiveness of the project was guided by one primary question: What effect did the Gospel Arc preaching model have on the preacher's experience of a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation through the biblical

text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon? Emergent findings and interpretations were analyzed and assessed primarily by the following three intended outcome variables:

1. Did they experience some level of gospel renewal? In other words, did a moment in their sermon preparation and/or proclamation occur when Jesus Christ and his salvation became clearer to their minds and more real to their hearts beyond new or true information? Did they experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation? The dynamic of gospel renewal could look like: 1) a spiritual impression consisting of listening and thinking in the presence of God (meditation and illumination); 2) adoration and a spiritual sense of God, his love, and the grace of Jesus Christ and his salvation (worship); 3) honesty and confession of sin before God or the doctrine of sin being experienced not just intellectually understood (repentance); 4) rest and reliance on Jesus Christ and his salvation (faith); 5) a different way of relating to others, an area of life, or life event (obedience); 6) the need of and petition for grace (petition); 7) communing prayer; 8) intercessory prayer or petitioning grace for others and other kingdom-centered prayers; or 9) other spiritual interactions with Jesus Christ and his salvation.
2. Did the participants identify and address a specific human condition, spiritual need, or burden in the text? If so, then space will have been created for the Holy Spirit to impress potentially upon them their own need of grace as identified in the text.
3. Did the participants discover and deliver a specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation in the text? If so, then space will have been created for the Holy Spirit to apply potentially Jesus Christ and his salvation as the solution to their own need of grace as identified in the text.

The data revealed that the participants experienced an increase in a specific set of both skill and experience dimensions of sermon preparation and proclamation. While the data firmly suggests that the project was successful in achieving its initial purpose, questions about the long-term success of this project remain. Even with such a hesitation in mind, this project affirms the opening statement that those who preach with him in view encounter him anew and that the need of gospel renewal for pastors, churches, communities, and the world is always relevant.

Theological Reflection

While evaluating a religious experience is difficult to say the least, the inherent difficulty has not prevented the church from trying.¹ In Chapter Two, I asserted that God's Spirit speaks to us in his Word, that is, Jesus Christ. In other words, Jesus Christ and his salvation comprise the ultimate subject (speech) and intent (act) in all of Scripture to be personally and corporately experienced by the work of the Holy Spirit, resulting in gospel renewal. Therefore, those who preach with him in view encounter him anew.

The Gospel Arc preaching project affirmed that assertion on three fronts for the participants: 1) their need to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) through the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon, 2) their experience of a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) through the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming the sermon was both intelligent and mystical, and 3) their experience of a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) through the biblical text impacted their experience of proclamation.

Pastors Need to Experience Gospel Renewal through the Biblical Text while Preparing and Proclaiming the Sermon

The call to gospel ministry in the church is hard. Pastors must learn to live with what comes out of them and what comes at them. Their messy hearts combined with messy people, life events, and ministry, all possess the power to break down the pastor.²

1. See Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 113, for the various ways the church attempts to codify the way the Spirit speaks and works in the world.

2. See Paul Vitello, "Taking a Break from the Lord's Work," *The New York Times* (August 1, 2010).

The need to experience living encounters with Jesus Christ and his salvation (gospel renewal) is critical for the life and ministry of a pastor. In other words, if you are a pastor, gospel renewal is immediately relevant. Thus, the preacher's primary call to prepare and proclaim the Word of God is a big deal, which has the potential either to add to the internal and external stress of a pastor or to renew him, the church, and the world.

In this light, it was no surprise that the pastoral participants in the Gospel Arc preaching project evidenced the need to experience gospel renewal through the biblical text during sermon preparation and proclamation (see Appendices E and F). Two initial findings from the pre-survey intervention were notable. First was the participants' low experience (thirty-seven percent) of the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) in the text during sermon preparation. Second was the participants' low Christ-centered experience in the text during sermon preparation: 1) the confession of sin (forty percent, with twenty-nine percent in "disagreement"), 2) the petition for grace (thirty-six percent), and 3) the reliance upon Jesus Christ (forty-seven percent).

Three primary findings from the participants' guided journals were also notable for gospel renewal implications. First, some of the participant descriptions of the human condition in the text were general and vague, such as "human sin," "our sinfulness," and "the need we have to hear the gospel." The lack of textual specificity revealed a lack of personal interaction with the human need or burden in the text, thereby indicating a potential need for gospel renewal.

Second, some of the participant descriptions of the human condition in the text were textually and personally specific, such as "humans have loves that are disordered," "even though we have seen God's power and felt his hand on us, we still doubt when the

storms of life close in,” “do I really believe he is with me or not?” “we don’t know we are dead and we don’t know we can’t hear God,” and “our tendency to want to hurt others.”

The presence of textual and personal specificity revealed a personal interaction with the human need or burden in the text, thereby indicating the potential presence of gospel renewal in process.

Third, one participant specifically spoke of the stress and pain present in their ministry context and then how the human condition in the text impacted him and his listeners:

This week was challenging but also rich and rewarding. We are going through a lot of conflict and turnover as a church, and this passage was one I hesitated to choose, but I honestly felt I needed to hear it and our church did as well. . . . Round 3 (i.e., locating the human condition in the text) and the “heart map” brought to light the idea that the people were broken and helpless. We get this way as well in life.

Furthermore, working with Rom. 5:1-5, the same participant noted, “It (i.e., the Gospel Arc preaching model) gave me language and clearer vision to identify what I was experiencing in my own heart and the hearts of those I pastor.”

Two secondary findings from the post-survey intervention were notable for gospel renewal implications. First, the participants’ experience of the human condition in the text increased during the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention (from thirty-seven to fifty-one percent). Furthermore, those who “agreed” to experiencing the human condition in the text increased from twenty-nine to fifty-seven percent, while those who “strongly agreed” increased from zero to twenty-nine percent. Second, the participants’ Christ-centered experiences increased during the Gospel Arc preaching model intervention. Confessing sin to God increased from forty to forty-nine percent, while the twenty-nine percent who “disagreed” disappeared to zero percent. Asking for grace increased from

thirty-six to fifty-three percent, while those who “agreed” increased from twenty-nine to seventy-one percent. Finally, reliance upon Jesus Christ increased from forty-seven to fifty-six percent, while those who “strongly agreed” increased from fourteen to seventy-one percent.

Gospel Renewal with the Biblical Text while Preparing and Proclaiming the Sermon Is Both Intelligent and Mystical

There is a tendency in the church, both individually and corporately, to swing back and forth between the poles of rationalism and mysticism. At times, it appears that a choice must be made between the two. Scottish theologian John Murray notes that the choice is a false dilemma: “It is necessary for us to recognize that there is an intelligent mysticism in the life of faith . . . of living union and communion with the exalted and ever-present Redeemer.”³ Therefore, experiencing living encounters of Jesus Christ and his salvation, or what I have been referring to as gospel renewal throughout this project, is both intelligent and mystical. It is intelligent because faith comes by hearing the good news (Rom 10:13-17 and Gal 3:1-7); it is mystical because ultimately it is the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, “intelligent mysticism” is the ordinary work of the Holy Spirit applying Jesus Christ and his salvation from all of Scripture to people and places in a justifying and sanctifying way.

The Gospel Arc preaching project created space for intelligent mysticism to occur among the participants through the biblical text while preparing and proclaiming their three sermons. First, the Gospel Arc preaching project sought intelligent gospel renewal. The aim for the participants was to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation through the biblical text (intelligent mysticism), not apart from it

3. John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 237.

(mysticism). By identifying and addressing a specific human condition, spiritual need, or burden in the text (not apart from it), space was created for the Holy Spirit potentially to impress upon the participants their own need of grace as identified in the text (not apart from it). The increase in the participants' skill dimension of the human condition in the text (not apart from it) indicated the possibility of intelligent mysticism during the Gospel Arc preaching project.

By discovering and delivering a specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation in the text (not apart from it), space was created for the Holy Spirit potentially to apply Jesus Christ and his salvation as the solution to their own need of grace as identified in the text (not apart from it). The increase in the participants' skill dimension of the redemptive aspect in the text (not apart from it) indicated the possibility of intelligent mysticism during the Gospel Arc preaching project.

Second, the Gospel Arc preaching project sought mystical gospel renewal. The aim was for the participants to experience a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation through the biblical text (intelligent mysticism), not just explain the text (rationalism). The increase in the participants' experience dimension of the human condition in the text (not just explain the text) indicated the possibility of intelligent mysticism during the Gospel Arc preaching project. Furthermore, the increase in the participants' experience dimension of the redemptive aspect in the text (not just explain the text) indicated the possibility of intelligent mysticism during the Gospel Arc preaching project.

Gospel Renewal through the Biblical Text while Preparing the Sermon Impacts the Proclamation Experience

Given that the participants experienced some level of gospel renewal (see above), this experience impacted their proclamation experience. All the participants experienced a remarkable increase in their experience of God during the delivery of their three sermons. Seventy-one percent “strongly agreed” to experience God during the delivery of their sermons, which is a forty-one percent increase. Furthermore, experiencing God during their sermon delivery was already high according to the pre-intervention survey (forty-nine percent): therefore, an overall eight percent increase for experiencing God during the Gospel Arc preaching project was significant (from forty-nine to fifty-seven percent).

Bob indicated that he intentionally picked a passage he had preached before (Gen 28:10-22) to “see how I would approach it this time.” He expressed the impact on his delivery this way: “The Gospel Arc made me keenly aware of the grace that permeated the entire passage and Jacob narrative. As with last week, I feel like the Arc helps you encounter the text more personally, which then aids in how genuinely you can then express yourself in the sermon.”

Improvements for the Project

While the overall impact of the project was positive, some concerns remain. The first involves the inherently limited nature of evaluating religious experience in general. The other involves the persistent concern for how much is enough to equip participants with a genuine gospel instinct for reading and communicating the Bible. Both these

issues present challenges for the ongoing implementation of the Gospel Arc preaching model at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, in Waco, in the rest of Texas, and beyond.

Increase the Ability to Assess the Experience of Gospel Renewal

Nailing JELL-O to the wall pretty much grasps the task here. How does one measure gospel renewal? How does one measure the experience of a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation through the biblical text in sermon preparation and proclamation? The pre- and post-intervention surveys proved incomplete. The significant difference between what I labeled “God-centered” experiences and “Christ-centered” experiences exposed a shortfall. Why were the God-centered experiences higher than the Christ-centered experiences? Were the differences due to simple semantics, differing religious traditions, differing religious expressions and language, something else, or even something more profound that was missed? Would someone from a different culture simply be confused by the language employed by the project to describe and evaluate a religious experience in sermon preparation and proclamation? Furthermore, I am not saying the participants were dishonest, but how accurate was their reflection of their experience?

The need is for some pre- and post-survey questions that are not just descriptive but also instructive. In other words, the project revealed the need for some pre- and post-survey questions that function like a mirror to help participants see and diagnose their own heart or religious experience. For example:

1. During my sermon preparation, I experience a spiritual impression that consists of listening and thinking in the presence of God (illumination and meditation).

2. During my sermon preparation, I experience adoration or a spiritual sense of God, his majesty, his mercy, his love, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and his salvation (worship).
3. During my sermon preparation, I experience honesty and confession of sin before God; or the doctrine of sin being experienced not just intellectually understood (repentance).
4. During my sermon preparation, I experience a new desire and new direction for living, relating to others, an area of life, a life event, or for following Jesus (new obedience).
5. During my sermon preparation, I experience my need and weakness, the need of and petition for grace (petitioning grace).
6. During my sermon preparation, I experience intercessory prayer or the petitioning of grace for others (kingdom-centered prayers).
7. During my sermon preparation, I experience Jesus and his salvation in a clearer way to the mind and more real way to the heart; I grow in resting, relying, and rejoicing in Jesus and his work for me (faith).

Increase the Training to Help Reach a “Gospel Instinct” Goal

How much training and implementation of the project is enough to equip participants with a genuine gospel instinct for reading and communicating the Bible that only deepens as they mature in their preparation and proclamation experience? The Gospel Arc preaching model is not so much a fixed homiletical method as it is a way to read and communicate the Scriptures. The goal is to help develop a gospel instinct or to learn to tap into the way Jesus and the New Testament writers read the Bible. Therefore, I would add four more equipping components to the project to help achieve this goal.

First, preach six sermons instead of three in the following order: 1) a New Testament epistle, 2) a Gospel narrative, 3) a passage from Acts, 4) an Old Testament narrative, 5) a Psalm, and 6) a text from Proverbs. Second, debrief after each week by: 1) walking through their Gospel Arc manual for that week, 2) fielding questions, and 3)

further instruction. Third, form the participants into a band of brothers to meet regularly for friendship. Fourth, create preaching cohorts for participants to preach through the same biblical texts together at their respective churches. Each week, they would agree upon a time to share their sweat in the text, discuss the text, discuss homiletical directions, and to share the joys and burdens of ministry.

Significance of the Project

Local Significance

At the most basic level, the Gospel Arc preaching project proved significant in the preaching preparation and proclamation of the participants for three weeks. All noted its new approach to the text from which they and their congregations benefited.

Furthermore, if the preparation skill for identifying a specific aspect of the human condition and of Jesus Christ and his salvation in the text continues, then space will be created regularly for the Holy Spirit to do the work of gospel renewal in the life of the participants, their churches, and their respective communities. Perhaps God would grant a gospel movement to grow and flourish as multitudes of people learned to build their messy lives around Jesus and his salvation, thereby resulting in a tipping point of gospel renewal that spills over into Waco and beyond (Col 1:3-8).

Significance for the Field

At a broader level, the Gospel Arc preaching project suggests that it is possible to start a movement of preachers committed to personally experiencing a living encounter with Jesus Christ and his salvation, in all of Scripture, and during sermon preparation and proclamation, to see the gospel run and triumph in pastors, people, the home, the church,

communities, places, and the world. Personally, I am committed to such a movement as steps are currently being taken to begin a “Center for Gospel Renewal” to reach and renew leaders, churches, communities, and the world with the transforming power of the gospel. The DMin program at Truett Theological Seminary with its gifted professors and friends has been the soil out of which the Gospel Arc preaching project has grown. The Gospel Arc preaching project is the theological vision and core driving the “Center for Gospel Renewal” in Central Texas.

Chapter Conclusion

The Gospel Arc preaching project trail-blazed a practical way to transform ministers, churches, and communities by means of gospel renewal utilizing all of Scripture. The compelling need for the Gospel Arc preaching model lies not in itself, but in the potential to create space for the Holy Spirit to do the work of gospel renewal through the biblical text in the life of preachers and hearers. Coming full circle with the project’s first words, those who preach with him in view encounter him anew.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Gospel Arc Pre-Intervention Survey

[Skill Dimension]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I have previous training in Christ-centered preaching.						
2. I intentionally set aside time in sermon preparation to listen						
3. While preparing a sermon, I intentionally look for a particular aspect of the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) addressed in the text.						
4. While preparing a sermon, I intentionally look for a particular aspect of redemption revealed in the text.						
5. I intentionally structure my sermon around a particular aspect of redemption revealed in the text.						
[Experience Dimension]						
6. Sermon preparation is generally a burden for me.						
7. During my sermon preparation, I experience the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) revealed in the text.						
8. During my sermon preparation, I experience God.						
9. During my sermon preparation, I confess my sin to God.						
10. During my sermon preparation, I experience reliance upon						
11. During my sermon preparation, I ask for the grace of God						
12. During my sermon preparation, I feel God's love.						
13. During my sermon preparation, I commune with God in prayer.						
14. Sermon delivery is generally a burden for me.						
15. During my sermon delivery, I experience God.						

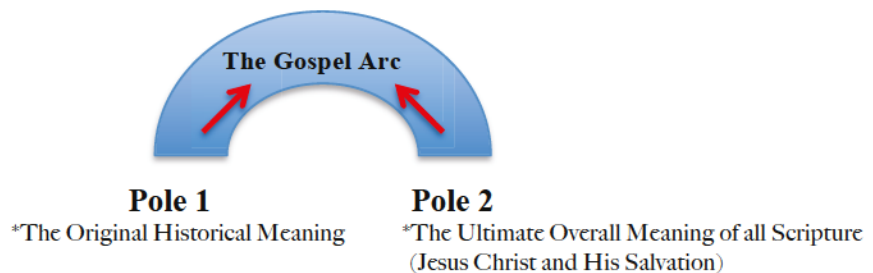
The Gospel Arc Post-Intervention Survey

			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
[Skill Dimension]								
1.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I intentionally set aside time to listen to God in and with the text.								
2.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I intentionally looked for a particular aspect of the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) addressed in the text.								
3.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I intentionally looked for a particular aspect of redemption revealed in the text.								
4.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I intentionally structured my sermon around a particular aspect of redemption revealed in the text.								
[Experience Dimension]								
5.) Sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc has been a burden for me.								
6.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I experienced the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) in the text.								
7.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I experienced God.								
8.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I confessed my sin to God.								
9.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I experienced reliance upon Jesus Christ.								
10.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I asked for the grace of God.								
11.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I felt God's love.								
12.) During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I communed with God in prayer.								
13.) Sermon delivery with the Gospel Arc has been a burden for me.								
14.) During my sermon delivery with the Gospel Arc, I experienced God.								
15.) Describe your overall experience with the Gospel Arc.								

APPENDIX B

The Gospel Arc Preaching Manual

The Gospel Arc



Text:

Name:

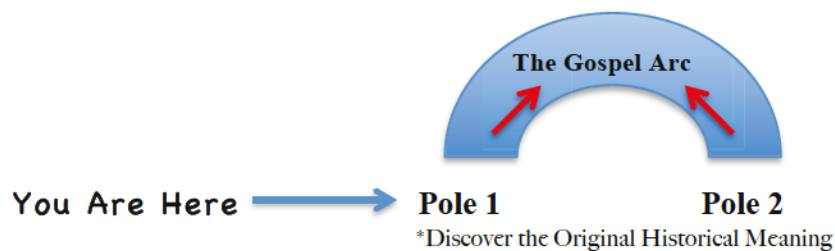
ROUND 1: LISTEN TO THE TEXT

Listening Tool:

- listen to God in and with the text
- luxuriate in the text
- slow, gentle reading
- a spontaneous, even naïve engagement with the text
- learning to listen, think, feel, see, imagine, encounter, and ask questions of the text in the presence of God
- imagination and empathy come first, and analysis comes second
- the strangeness of the Bible asks us to admit our vision is blurry

1. Listen for Yourself (become an “intelligent mystic”):
2. Listen to the World of the Text (enter into the life of the text):
3. Listen for Others (become a “physician of the soul”):

The Gospel Arc



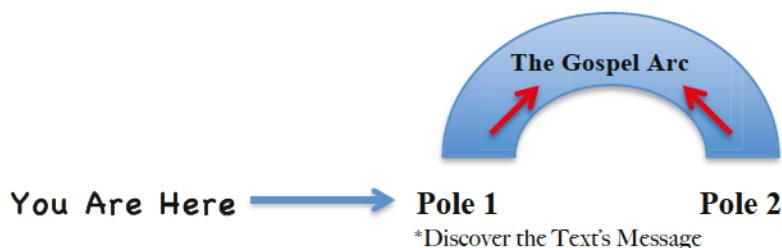
ROUND 2: UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

1. Create a **Textual Map** (itemize main and supporting ideas):
2. With a **Running Commentary** (answer significant questions in the text – literary, historical, and theological; employ study aids after some sweat equity in the text):

Interpretive Tool (pay special attention to significant):

1. words
2. ideas
3. repetitions
4. connector words
5. images
6. allusions and quotes from other places in the Bible
7. characters and dialogue
8. scenes and places
9. actions and events
10. historical background
11. the unexpected, unusual surprises, out of place details, and questions that provoke you in the text (great place for the deepest meaning to hide)

The Gospel Arc



ROUND 3: DISCOVER THE TEXT'S MESSAGE

1. Identify a particular aspect of the **human condition** (HC) addressed in the text.

Human Condition Tool:

1. What is the *God-sized* or *God-shaped* "hole" found in the text due to the functional impact of the absence of God upon the human condition (i.e. the fallen condition is both deprived and depraved)?
2. What is the "mental map" and/or "heart map" of the individual people and/or corporate people (culture) in the text?
3. What is the universal human need, burden, condition, or conflict in or behind the text?
4. Who are the people or what are the places in view in the text?
5. What is the universal human condition of the participants and/or hearers being addressed?
6. What required the writing of this text?
7. Why might the Holy Spirit have inspired the text?
8. What is the universal human need, burden, condition, or conflict in the text that requires the grace of Jesus Christ and his salvation?

***Record in a Sticky Statement or Vivid Image:**

2. Identify the primary thing the text is saying or the **Big Idea** of the text.

Big Idea Tool:

1. What is the primary powerful thing the text is saying?
2. What is the dominant thought, idea, image, story, need, "Aha!", subject, theme, or content in the text?
3. What is the "freshly squeezed" essence of the text?

***Record in a Sticky Statement or Vivid Image:**

3. Identify the primary thing the text is doing with what it is saying or the **Applied Big Idea** of the text.

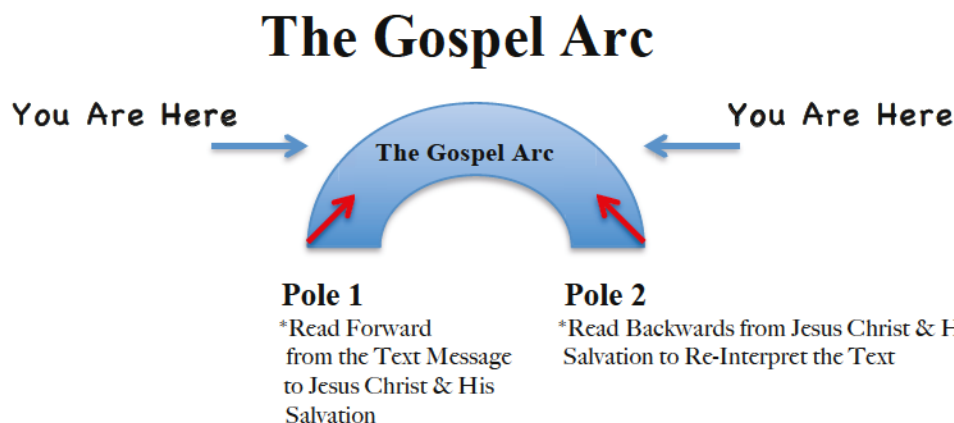
Applied Big Idea Tool:

1. What is the primary powerful thing the text is doing with what it is saying?
2. Where is the passage going?
3. Where is the passage taking us?
4. What is the force, function, movement, intention, action, practical difference, or transformative possibility of the controlling content?

***Record in a Sticky Statement or Vivid Image:**

Literary Tool:

1. If the text is **narrative literature** or a *story*, then discover how the setting, characters, conflict or plot line, and resolution or lack thereof communicate the three interpretive textual tracks.
2. If the text is **propositional literature** or a *logical argument*, then discover how the flow of the main and supporting ideas communicate the three interpretive textual tracks.
3. If the text is **law** or an *ethical principle*, then discover how the ideal or anti-ideal communicate the three interpretive textual tracks.
4. If the text is **wisdom literature**, then discover how the “fabric of creation” (i.e. the regular patterns or order in creation) or the “futility of creation” (i.e. the irregular patterns that hide and confuse the reality of God’s order because of sin) communicates the three interpretive textual tracks.
5. If the text is **poetic literature**, then discover how the image that brings the *world of proposition* and the *world of sensory experience* together communicates the three interpretive textual tracks.
6. If the text is **apocalyptic literature**, then discover how the visual revelation (rather than aural) communicates the three interpretive textual tracks.



ROUND 4: DISCOVER THE GOSPEL ARC IN THE TEXT

1. Read forward by following the divinely embedded **Gospel Threads** in the text (think it out below):

Gospel Thread Tool (Pole 1 gives a pattern of significance to Jesus and his salvation):

1. An **attribute and/or action of God** in the text that is addressing the universal human condition, need, or burden in the text. Follow this gospel thread to its ultimate example or embodiment in Jesus Christ and his salvation.
2. A **theme or idea** in the text. Follow this gospel thread to its ultimate resolution in Jesus Christ and his salvation.
3. A **law or biblical ethic** in the text. Follow this gospel thread to its completion in Jesus Christ and his salvation.
4. An **image** in the text. Follow this gospel thread to its substance or ultimate reality in Jesus Christ and his salvation.
5. A **type or symbol** in the text. Follow this gospel thread to its ultimate fulfillment or reality in Jesus Christ and his salvation.
6. A **story of an individual or community** in the text. Follow this gospel thread to its ultimate bigger story of Jesus Christ and his salvation.
7. An **instinct or sense** in the text. Follow this gospel thread to its ultimate convergence on Jesus Christ and his salvation.
8. A **sin and its consequences**, a *heart and life issue*, a *cultural heart and life issue*, a *spiritual need*, the *universal human "hole", condition, burden, and problem* in the text. Follow these gospel threads to their ultimate solution in Jesus Christ and his salvation.
9. The **human longing in the text**. Follow this gospel thread to its ultimate satisfaction in Jesus Christ and his salvation.
10. The **functional human trust**, hope, love, worship, salvation, justification, or God-replacement in the text. Follow this gospel thread to its ultimate source and satisfaction in Jesus Christ and his salvation.
11. The **grace at work in the text**. Follow this gospel thread to its ultimate source in Jesus Christ and his salvation.

2. Read backwards by looking through the **Gospel Lens** to re-interpret or map more meaning onto the text (think it out below).

Gospel Lens Tool (Pole 2 maps more meaning onto, completes, or reinterprets Pole 1):

Look at how Jesus and his salvation:

1. Addresses the universal human need, condition, or burden in the text.
2. Solves the tensions in the text.
3. Accomplishes what the text is doing (i.e. the ultimate application of the text).
4. Involves, corresponds to, maps more meaning onto, fulfills, escalates, or completes the divinely embedded signifiers (gospel threads) in the text.
5. Interprets the Old Testament allusions, echoes, or quotations in the New Testament text.
6. Provides the source or ultimate work of grace in the text.

3. Now, Craft the Specific **Gospel Arc** in the Text into **ONE Strong Statement** or *Vivid Image* (this freshly crafted Gospel Arc is what the sermon is built around):

Gospel Arc Tool:

- display the specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation revealed in the text to reach and renew lives.
- re-present Jesus Christ and his salvation from the text.
- take 2 lumps of clay (Pole 1 and Pole 2) and craft ONE specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation from the text.

***Craft into a Sticky Statement:**

***Craft into a Vivid Image:**

The Gospel Arc



*Build the Sermon Around the Gospel Arc

**A Gospel Arc Sermon is Built Around Re-Presenting Jesus Christ & His Salvation according to the Particular Way of the Text in a Way that is Clear to the Mind and Real to the Heart

ROUND 5: CRAFT A SERMON MESSAGE

1. Craft a **Sermon Message** (the sermon should say and do *one powerful thing* not many things):

Understanding the Sermon Message Tool:

A Sermon Message is Crafted Around the Five Interpretive Tracks Below:

1. Your recorded strong statement or vivid image for the **text's Big Idea** (or the one thing the passage is saying).
2. Your recorded strong statement or vivid image for the **text's Applied Big Idea** (or the one thing the passage is doing with what it is saying).
3. Your recorded strong statement or vivid image for the **universal human and/or cultural condition** being specifically addressed in the text.
4. Your recorded strong statement or vivid image for the **Gospel Arc** (or the specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation revealed in the text).
5. The specific human and/or cultural need of **contemporary hearers**.

Crafting a Sermon Message Tool:

There are Three Preferred Ways to Craft a Sermon Message Around the Five Interpretive Tracks Above:

1. **Blend them all together** into one *sticky statement, vivid image, or suspenseful question*. Whether blended together into one sticky statement, vivid image, or suspenseful question, the individual tracks become the supporting ideas or movements of the sermon.
2. **Lead with one track while the other tracks stand off stage** waiting to make key appearances during the event of the sermon. In other words, the lead track rules them all by becoming the sermon message and the other tracks play key supporting roles as needed.
3. **Follow a narrative form** that places the individual tracks into the plot line of one ultimate over-arching story or sermon message.

2. If **Blending** the Five Interpretive Tracks Together to Craft a Sermon Message:

Sticky Statement:

Vivid Image:

Suspenseful Question:

3. If **Leading with One** Interpretive Track while the Others Stand Off Stage to Craft a Sermon Message:

Lead Interpretive Track:

Other Interpretive Tracks Standing Off Stage to Make Key Appearances During the Sermon Event:

4. If Following a **Narrative** or Story Form to Craft a Sermon Message:

Over-Arching Story (i.e. “This is a story about ____”):

Individual Interpretive Tracks in the Story-Line:

*Once You Have Crafted a Sermon Message Build Everything Around It...

**Build A Sermon Map In Oral Form (natural scripting to be heard not read)...

- The aim of preaching is to experience Jesus Christ and his salvation with the text in order to transform lives, homes, the workplace, communities, and the surrounding culture.
- In other words, the aim of preaching is gospel renewal.
- Therefore, the sermon map should best support this aim.

APPENDIX C

Text Selection for the Participant's Three Sermons

Text Selection For Three Sermons

Upon completion of the three-hour Gospel ARC preaching model, participants will implement the Gospel ARC preaching model in their own preaching context for three weeks in close proximity. Sermons will be preached from the biblical genres of narrative and epistolary.

Week 1: Choose a Passage from the Following New Testament Passages

Romans 1:16-17
Romans 5:1-5
Galatians 1:6-10
Galatians 3:1-6
Colossians 1:3-8

Week 2: Choose a Passage from the Following Old Testament Passages

Genesis 28:10-22
Exodus 12
Exodus 17:1-7
1 Samuel 17
1 Kings 17:17-24

Week 3: Choose a Passage from the Following Mixture of Passages

Ezekiel 37
Daniel 3:8-30
Mark 4:35-41
John 5:39-47
Romans 12:1-2

***The passage options are intended to gradually increase the level of textual care needed to discover the specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation revealed in the text.**

APPENDIX D

The Participant's Weekly Guided Journal for the Three Sermons

Weekly Guided Journal

Name:

Text:

Week #:

1. How would you describe your overall experience with the Gospel ARC preaching model this week for preparing (crafting) and proclaiming (delivery) your sermon?
2. While preparing your sermon this week, did the Gospel ARC preaching model help you identify and address a specific human condition, need, hole, or burden in the text? Please explain your answer.
3. What specific aspect of Jesus Christ and his salvation was revealed in the text as the divine solution for the human need identified in the text? Describe your own personal interaction with this specific aspect of good news or grace in the text.
4. Did Jesus and his salvation become more clear or real to you this week beyond new or true information during your sermon preparation and/or delivery? If yes, please describe the experience.

APPENDIX E

Pre-Intervention Survey Findings

Pre-Intervention Survey

	Average (Mean)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have previous training in Christ-centered preaching.	36%	14%	14%	14%	14%	43%	0%
Skill Dimension							
1. I intentionally set aside time in sermon preparation to listen to God in and with the text.	47%	0%	0%	0%	29%	71%	0%
2. While preparing a sermon, I intentionally look for a particular aspect of the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) addressed in the text.	46%	0%	14%	14%	0%	43%	29%
3. While preparing a sermon, I intentionally look for a particular aspect of	50%	0%	0%	0%	29%	43%	29%

redemption revealed in the text.							
4. I intentionally structure my sermon around a particular aspect of redemption revealed in the text.	41%	0%	14%	0%	43%	43%	0%
Experience Dimension							
5. Sermon preparation is generally a burden for me.	24%	14%	43%	29%	14%	0%	0%
6. During my sermon preparation, I experience the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) revealed in the text.	37%	0%	0%	57%	14%	29%	0%
7. During my sermon preparation, I experience God.	49%	0%	0%	0%	14%	86%	0%
8. During my sermon preparation, I confess my sin to God.	40%	0%	29%	0%	14%	57%	0%
9. During my sermon preparation, I experience reliance upon	47%	0%	0%	0%	43%	43%	14%

Jesus Christ.							
10. During my sermon preparation, I ask for the grace of God.	36%	0%	0%	14%	43%	29%	14%
11. During my sermon preparation, I feel God's love.	47%	0%	0%	14%	14%	57%	14%
12. During my sermon preparation, I commune with God in prayer.	47%	0%	0%	0%	29%	71%	0%
13. Sermon delivery is generally a burden for me.	23%	14%	57%	14%	14%	0%	0%
14. During my sermon delivery, I experience God.	49%	0%	0%	14%	14%	43%	29%

APPENDIX F

Post-Intervention Survey Findings

Post-Intervention Survey

	Average (Mean)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Describe your overall experience with the Gospel Arc.							
Skill Dimension							
1. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I intentionally set aside time to listen to God in and with the text.	54%	0%	0%	0%	0%	57%	43%
2. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I intentionally looked for a particular aspect of the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) addressed in the text.	59%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	86%

3. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I intentionally looked for a particular aspect of redemption revealed in the text.	53%	0%	0%	0%	0%	71%	29%
4. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I intentionally structured my sermon around a particular aspect of redemption revealed in the text.	53%	0%	0%	0%	0%	71%	29%
Experience Dimension							
5. Sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc has been a burden for me.	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	0%	0%
6. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I experienced the human condition (such as the craving for human approval) in the text.	51%	0%	0%	0%	14%	57%	29%

7. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I experienced God.	53%	0%	0%	0%	0%	71%	29%
8. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I confessed my sin to God.	49%	0%	0%	14%	14%	49%	29%
9. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I experienced reliance upon Jesus Christ.	56%	0%	0%	0%	14%	14%	71%
10. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I asked for the grace of God.	53%	0%	0%	0%	0%	71%	29%
11. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I felt God's love.	57%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	71%
12. During my sermon preparation with the Gospel Arc, I communed with God in prayer.	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%	49%	51%
13. Sermon delivery with the Gospel Arc has been a burden for me.	29%	14%	0%	71%	14%	0%	0%

14. During my sermon delivery with the Gospel Arc, I experienced God.	57%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	71%
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APPENDIX G

Letter of Support from the Session of Redeemer Presbyterian Church

Being authorized by resolution of THE SESSION OF REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH adopted in called Session meeting on the 7th day of Month, 2017, permission is hereby granted to JEFFREY CHRISTIAN HATTON to conduct research in and with participant local pastors as described in his culminating project proposal for the Doctor of Ministry degree as approved by the Doctor of Ministry Committee at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I execute my name as duly elected clerk of THE SESSION OF REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

WITNESS MY HAND this 7th day of June, 2017.

Clerk of the Session

Date

APPENDIX H

Informed Consent Form

Baylor University

Certification of Informed Consent

**Principle Investigator: Jeffrey Christian Hatton, Doctor of Ministry Candidate
George W. Truett Theological Seminary**

This form asks for your consent to participate in research for Jeffrey Christian Hatton's Doctor of Ministry project. For this research you will be asked to share your thoughts, feelings, and impressions experienced over a three-week intervention during your own preaching context. The purpose of the research is to determine the effect of the Gospel ARC preaching model on your experience of sermon preparation and proclamation. You will be asked to participate in one three-hour training session (3 hours total) in the Gospel ARC preaching model, to implement the Gospel ARC preaching model in your own preaching context for three consecutive weeks (producing three sermons from three different texts), and to keep a guided weekly journal during the three-week Gospel ARC preaching model intervention soon after the preaching event for a total of three entries (each entry should take no longer than thirty minutes to record). Furthermore, the amount of time necessary to implement the Gospel ARC preaching model each week should equate to your normal preaching preparation and proclamation routine. The total number of hours you will be asked to participate are 4.5 hours plus your normal preaching preparation and proclamation time for three weeks.

There will be no physical risks at any time. You may elect, either now or at any time during the study, to withdraw your participation, with no penalty or loss of benefits. You should understand that your participation is completely voluntary.

I will use the information from this study to write a report concerning what you and X other participants have experienced. This report will be read by a faculty committee at Baylor University George W. Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas and ultimately will be bound and made available in the library at Baylor University. At no time will your name be published in any form. All records related to this research will be kept in the researcher's secure home study for three (3) years and then destroyed. Electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer and destroyed in three (3) years. All data will be accessible only to the researcher. In data that is published, names will be changed in order to protect your confidentiality and anonymity. Though names will be changed (pseudonyms used), there is still a risk that a breach of confidentiality and/or anonymity may occur.

The results will be tabulated in the coming months, and will be available for you to review, should you wish to see the outcome. This data will allow us to understand how the Gospel ARC preaching model effects the experience of the preacher's sermon preparation and proclamation.

Please direct all inquiries to Jeff Hatton, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2501 Ritchie Road, Waco, Texas, 76712. Mr. Hatton can also be reached at (254) 855-6389.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, or any other aspect of the research as it relates to you as a participant, please contact the Baylor University Committee for Protection of Human Subjects in Research, Dr. Dave Schlueter, 1 Bear Place, P.O. Box 97368, Waco, TX 76798. Dr. Schlueter may also be reached at (254) 710-710-6920 or (254) 710-3708.

I have read and understood this form, am aware of my rights as a participant, and have agreed to participate in this research.

Name (signature)

Date

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