

**Exalting Christ Conference**  
**Brian Borgman**

**Seminar Session: Thoughts on Preaching Christ in the Era of Christ-Centered Preaching**

**The Era of Christ-Centered Preaching**

1. I for one am incredibly glad for a renewed interest in expository preaching over the last 40 years or so.
2. I am also glad for a renewed interest in redemptive-history, and I am glad for the influence a redemptive-historical approach has had on preaching.
  - 2.1 The issue needs to be framed in terms of a certain kind of preaching that has dominated the church landscape for a very long time. That kind of preaching has often been called “exemplary” preaching. It deals primarily with the treatment of OT narrative.
  - 2.2 Part of the history needs to begin with pre-critical exegesis.
  - 2.3. Post-Reformation/Modern era: Exemplary preaching became one of the main features of Reformed and evangelical preaching.

Understanding and preaching the Scripture became increasingly:

- i. A-historical
  - ii. Subjective
  - iii. Individual, “which has no eye for the significance of covenant and church.” (Greidanus, 33).
  - iv. Spiritual (Schilder’s word was “mystical/mysticism), “reduces Christian living to the inner life” (Greidanus).
- 2.4. The evangelicalism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was plagued by a kind of exemplary preaching that could rightly be called moralism.
3. The discovery/rediscovery of biblical theology and redemptive-history.

We do not read the OT as if the incarnation has not occurred, we read it in light of the incarnation, the cross, the resurrection.

We read the OT in light of the fuller NT revelation of the Trinity, the appearing of God’s Son, the giving of the Spirit.

\*Greidnaus pointed out that our hermeneutics and homiletics are inexorably connected.

**A Current Assessment of Christ-Centered Preaching**

1. There is a positive element in that it takes seriously such passages as Lk. 24:25-27, 44-47 and Jn 5:39, 46.

- There is a sensitivity to the broader redemptive historical context.
  - There is a sensitivity against moralism, legalism, and Christ-less preaching.
2. In some circles, those positive elements eclipse everything else.
  3. Perhaps in our hunt to uproot all exemplary or moralistic preaching, we might be missing something.  
There is a Christ-centered type preaching which is not consistent with all the ways the NT understands and applies the OT.
  - 3.1 You are Not David! Or Are You?
  - 3.2 1 Cor. 10
  - 3.3 Heb. 11
  - 3.4 James 5:18-18

### **How to Preach Exemplary Sermons in a Faithful Christ-Centered Way**

I am advocating that we keep up our Christ-centered preaching because that's how the New understands and uses the Old. But I am also urging us to use the Old in *all the ways* the New uses the Old, which means there is place for exemplary preaching, which is moored to the great redemptive themes.

We should never preach the moral examples outside the context of redemptive grace. But within the context of the Gospel, we should preach OT examples. After all, they all had like natures as ours.

1. Observe the text, how is this OT saint being portrayed.
2. Even in exemplary preaching, keep the indicatives and imperatives lined up and the grace of Gospel central.