

PREACHING THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

SPRING 2005

HOM 650-04
Tuesdays 6:00-8:45

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"To do better exegesis, you must become a deeper person." - Brevard Childs
"To become a deeper person, you must do better exegesis." - Wes Allen

Purpose

Sound exegesis is necessary if today's preaching is to contain any of the depth and power of the ancient Christian *kerygma*. The link between academic biblical scholarship and the life of the church and of the individual Christian sitting in the pew, however, is often strained. In this seminar students will enhance their skills in critical interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels that should be used in the service of preaching the Good News as well as examining pitfalls into which trained exegetes can fall when making the move from the desk to the pulpit.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will gain a broad socio-historical, narrative, and theological overview of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
2. Students will become skilled at using a variety of critical exegetical methods in service to preaching on the Synoptic Gospels.

Textbooks

Biblical Texts

An NRSV Study Bible; preferably, *HarperCollins Study Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993).

Throckmorton, Burton H., ed. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992).

Secondary Texts

O. Wesley Allen, Jr., *Reading the Synoptic Gospels* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000).

David J. Ourisman, *From Gospel to Sermon: Preaching synoptic texts* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000).

Mark Allan Powell, *Fortress Introduction to the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998).

COURSE POLICIES

- **Attendance**

Class attendance is expected and affects your class participation grade. Being significantly late for class or being repeatedly late will be counted as absences.

- **Cell Phones**
Cell phones should be turned *off* during class. Cell phones disturbing class will affect your class participation grade.
- **Assignment Due Dates**
All assignments are due at the beginning of class as listed on the schedule below. Any assignment missed or turned in late will create weeping and gnashing of teeth in relation to one's grade.
Dates that sermons will be preached in class will be selected and negotiated in class. Once a date is set, however, it cannot be changed. Failure to preach on an assigned date will result in a student receiving a zero for the sermon.
- **Inclusive Language**
For written materials, class discussions and sermons delivered in class, students will be expected to be familiar with and adhere to the Inclusive Language Policy of the Seminary.
- **Plagiarism**
Students are expected to be familiar with and follow the School's policy concerning plagiarism. Plagiarism in preaching is a widespread problem that weakens the proclamation and reception of the Gospel. However, the oral nature of sermons requires assigning credit to sources in a different manner than one uses in written materials. We will discuss these issues when we turn our attention to imagery and language for the sermon.
- **Disabilities**
Lexington Theological Seminary complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you believe you have a condition that will require accommodation, please refer to the *Student Handbook*, page 9, and follow the procedures outlined. Please review this syllabus carefully and make an appointment with the professor to discuss any assignments for which you believe you will need accommodation according to the arrangements made with the dean.

Methodology & Assignments

As a seminar this class will primarily be discussion instead of lecture. We will learn from one another. During the first section of the course, students will prepare for each class by reading through Powell's introduction to the gospel for the day, then by reading through that gospel narrative in *one sitting*, and then by reading Ourisman's treatment of that gospel. This will provide a solid review and extension of knowledge of broad issues related to the gospels before we focus on the interpretation of individual pericopes.

During the second and longer section of the course, a new exegetical approach will be introduced each week. The first half of each class period will be dedicated to students' use of the method introduced the week before. Students will prepare weekly exegetical worksheets on a pericope from Matthew or Luke that will be assigned by the professor. Specific details concerning the format for these worksheets will be provided as the assignments draw near and will vary according to the method being studied, but each worksheet will include two major elements: 1) students will apply the exegetical method under investigation to the assigned text; and 2) students will comment on how they would or would not use the exegetical insights gained in writing a sermon on this text. These worksheets are to be distributed to the entire class online via Blackboard by Friday at 4:00 PM. We will discuss these worksheets during the first half of class on Tuesday (which means that students are to prepare by reviewing their colleagues' work in advance). The second half of each class will be devoted to introducing the next exegetical method (preparation will involve reading Allen).

In the third section of the course, students will integrate all of the methods studied into a single exegetical process that will be presented to the class one week and lead to the preparation and delivery of a sermon on that text for the following week. This assignment will be done twice.

Specifics of the sermon assignment (length of the sermon, delivery date, etc.) will be determined on the basis of final enrollment of the class. Students will supply a videotape for the sermon to be recorded (this should be a tape with sermons from Basic Preaching if the course was taken with me).

Grading

Class Preparation & Participation	10%
Exegetical Worksheets	50% (5% each)
Exegesis and Sermon Portfolios	40% (20% each)

Class Schedule

Overview of the Synoptic Gospels

Feb 1	Introduction to Course, General Synoptic Issues <i>Readings</i> Powell, "Four Stories of Jesus," 1-9 Powell, "From Jesus to Us," 10-37 Ourisman, "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus," 1-15
Feb 8	Mark <i>Readings</i> Powell, "The Gospel of Mark," 38-60 Ourisman, "Reading and Preaching the Gospel of Mark," 17-48 Read Mark in one sitting
Feb 15	Matthew <i>Readings</i> Powell, "The Gospel of Matthew," 61-84 Ourisman, "Reading and Preaching the Gospel of Matthew," 89-128 Read Matthew in one sitting.
Feb 22	Luke-Acts <i>Readings</i> Powell, "The Gospel of Luke," 85-111 Ourisman, "Reading and Preaching Luke-Acts," 49-88 Read Luke-Acts in one sitting

Exegetical Methodology

Mar 1

A. Establishing the Pericope (6:00-7:15)

Readings

Allen, "Introduction: How Hard Can It Be?" 1 -8

Allen, "Establishing the Pericope, Text and Plain Sense," 9-26

B. Socio-Historical & Literary Backgrounds (7:30-8:45)

Readings

Allen, "Social and Historical Backgrounds," 31 -39

Allen, "Literary Background," 41 -52

Mar 8

A. Establishing Pericope & Backgrounds Worksheets (6:00-7:15)

B. Form Criticism (7:30-8:45)

Readings

Vernon Robbins, "Form Criticism," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 2.841-44

Allen, "Form and Function," and "Excursus 2," 53 -74

Mar 15

SPRING BREAK

Mar 22

A. Form Criticism Worksheets (6:00-7:15)

B. Redaction Criticism (7:30-8:45)

Readings

Robert H. Stein, "Redaction Criticism," *ABD* 5.647-50

Allen, "Theological Editing," 75 -101

Mar 29

A. Redaction Criticism Worksheets (6:00-7:15)

B. Narrative Criticism (7:30-8:45)

Readings

Richard N. Soulen & R. Kendall Soulen, "Narrative," and "Narrative Criticism,"
in *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 118-120.

Allen, "Narrative Reading," 103 -16

Allen, "Select Literary Terms for Narrative Exegesis," 117 -22

Apr 5

A. Narrative Criticism Worksheets (6:00-7:15)

B. Reader Oriented Criticism (7:30-8:45)

Readings

Bernard C. Lategan, "Reader Response Theory," *ABD* 5.625-28.

Allen, "The Experience of the Implied Reader," 123 -34

Apr 12

A. Reader Oriented Worksheets (6:00-7:15)

B. Ideological Criticism (7:30-8:45)

Readings

Danna Nolan Fewell, "Reading the Bible Ideologically: Feminist criticism," in Steven L. McKenzie & Stephen R. Haynes, eds., *To Each Its Own Meaning: An introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their application*, 237-51

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist Hermeneutics," *ABD* 2.783-91

Carolyn Osiek, "The Feminist and the Bible: Hermeneutical Alternatives," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (SBL Centennial Publications 10; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985) 93-105.

Sermons

Apr 19

Exegetical Reviews

Apr 26

Preaching Homilies

May 3

Exegetical Reviews

May 10

Preaching Homilies