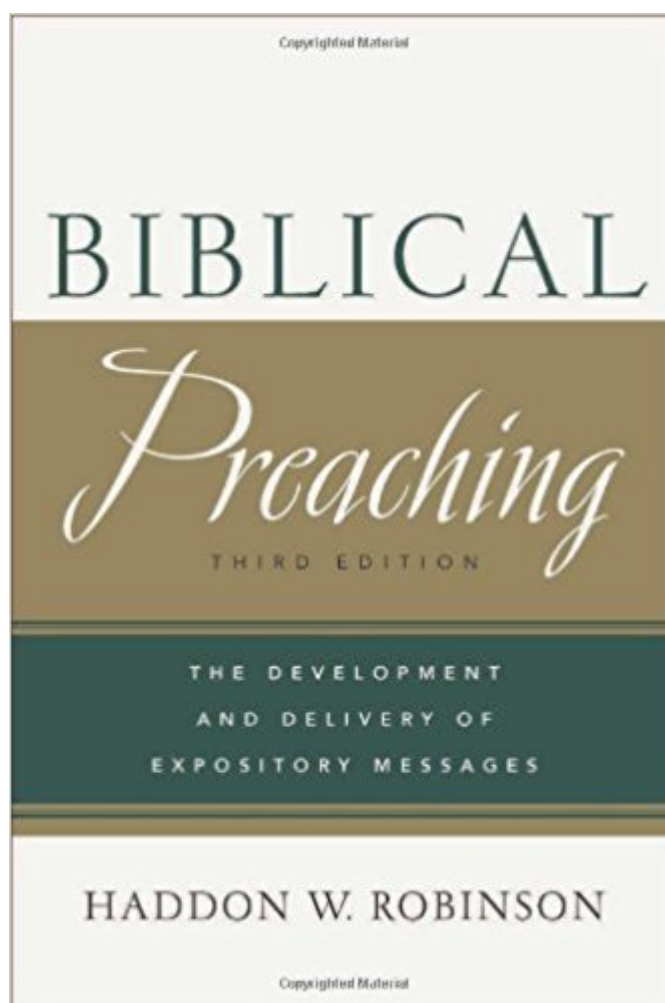


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# Biblical Preaching: The Development And Delivery Of Expository Messages



## Synopsis

This bestselling text by Haddon Robinson, considered by many to be the "teacher of preachers," has sold over 300,000 copies and is a contemporary classic in the field. It offers students, pastors, and Bible teachers expert guidance in the development and delivery of expository sermons. This new edition has been updated throughout and includes helpful exercises. Praise for the Second Edition Named "One of the 25 Most Influential Preaching Books of the Past 25 Years" by Preaching "[An] outstanding introduction to the task of preparing and presenting biblical sermons. More than any other book of the past quarter century, Biblical Preaching has profoundly influenced a generation of evangelical preachers."--Preaching

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## Customer Reviews

This contemporary classic in the field of biblical preaching offers expert guidance in the development and delivery of expository sermons. The third edition has been updated throughout and includes helpful exercises. Praise for the Second Edition Named One of the Twenty-Five Most Influential Preaching Books of the Past Twenty-Five Years by Preaching "This book stands apart from all the others in terms of recognition by those who study preaching. . . . [An] outstanding introduction to the task of preparing and presenting biblical sermons. Robinson's 'Big Idea' preaching has shaped the thinking of thousands of expository preachers and been the major influence on many of those who teach preaching in today's classrooms. More than any other book of the past quarter century, Biblical Preaching has profoundly influenced a generation of evangelical preachers."--Preaching "Robinson's book is an excellent primer, the one I recommend and use. . . .

Robinson has thought himself clear on the mysterious process of birthing a sermon. Novices can cut their eyeteeth on this book, and seasoned preachers will see in black and white what they have done intuitively for years. The ten methodical stages with their examples and exercises make the art of preaching accessible."--Jeffrey Arthurs, Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society"

The definitive textbook on contemporary expository preaching. . . . Robinson's famous question 'What's the Big Idea?' has become the fundamental issue for thousands of preachers in their effort to understand the primary intention of a given text for contemporary audiences. Exercises at the end of each chapter enhance the practicality of the book. . . . An essential primer on preaching the Word of God faithfully and powerfully in these times."--Preaching.org"

Biblical Preaching brims with homiletic wisdom from a master of the art. . . . Whether a preacher is a neophyte or a seasoned veteran, this homiletical handbook rewards its readers thirty- and sixty- or even a hundredfold."--Clergy Journal

Haddon W. Robinson (1931-2017; PhD, University of Illinois) served as the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He authored numerous books, including *It's All in How You Tell It* and *Making a Difference in Preaching*.

Introduction"

In this book, I pass on a method to those learning to preach or to experienced people who want to brush up on the basics" (14). So says Dr. Haddon Robinson as he offers this second edition of this classic volume known as *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. Though first published in 1980, this work is still a staple in homiletics departments and pastors' studies across the world.

Robinson received his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois and serves as the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Prior to this position, he served as president and professor of homiletics at Denver Seminary after teaching homiletics at Dallas Theological Seminary for nineteen years.

Summary

Chapter One, entitled "The Case for Expository Preaching," Robinson begins by saying, "This is a book about expository preaching, but it may have been written for a depressed market." In this chapter, Robinson shows the lack of regard for expository preaching in evangelical circles, then outlines the church's need for this manner of preaching and exactly what expository preaching is. Chapter Two, entitled "What's the Big Idea?" displays the importance of an expositor to mine out one main concept or idea. He defines an idea as something which "enables us to see what was previously unclear" (39). He also notes that "an idea begins in the mind when things ordinarily separated come together to form unity that either did not exist before or was not recognized previously" (39). In Chapter Three, entitled "Tools of the Trade," Robinson introduces

three stages in preparing expository sermons: "choosing the passage to be preached" (53), studying the passage and gathering the notes (58), then proceeding to "relate the parts to each other to determine the exegetical idea and its development" (66). Chapter Four, entitled "The Road from Text to Sermon," includes stage four which is "analyzing the exegetical idea" (75). In Chapter Five, entitled "The Arrow and the Target," Robinson covers stages five and six in the development of expository preaching: "Formulating the Homiletical Idea" in which he encourages preachers to state their exegetical idea in "the most exact, memorable sentence possible" (103); and determining the purpose for the sermon. "A purpose differs from a sermon idea, therefore, in the same way that a target differs from the arrow; as taking a trip differs from studying a map; as baking a pie differs from reading a recipe" (107). In Chapter Six, entitled, "The Shapes Sermons Take," Robinson helps the preacher decide how to accomplish the purpose of the sermon as well as outlining the sermon (stages seven and eight, respectively). Chapter Seven addresses filling in the sermon outline and, as Robinson states in his title, "making dry bones live" (139). Chapter Eight has the provocative title, "Start with a Band and Quit All Over," which deals with the preparation of introductions and conclusions. Chapter Nine, entitled, "The Dress of Thought," Robinson notes, "Gift or not, we must use words, and the only question is whether we will use them poorly or well" (184). He helps the preacher in areas such as transitions, clarity of thought, developing a personal style, and the use of metaphors. The last chapter, "How to Preach So People Will Listen," deals with the delivery of the sermon itself. Robinson says that sermons "live only when they are preached. A sermon ineptly delivered arrives stillborn" (201).

**Critical Analysis** With engaging writing and timely humor, Robinson seeks to communicate one prominent theme: "expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept" (35). Even though one would be more persuaded by his thoughts had he served more in the preaching ministry of a local church (he served at Dallas Youth for Christ from 1952-55, then as Associate Pastor at the First Baptist Church of Medford, Oregon from 1956-1958), his principles of preparing and preaching expository sermons are tremendous and will serve the Church of Jesus Christ and his ministers very well indeed. One of the strengths of this work is its pastoral nature. Preachers are not called to be lecturers and are not simply called to preach the Word of God. Preachers are called to preach the Word of God to God's people. Robinson rightly observes that "we must preach to a world addressed by the TV commentator, the newspaper columnist, and the playwright" (29). In the Preface to the Second Edition, Robinson notes how the culture has changed since 1980 when this work was first published. "Television and the computer have influenced the ways we learn and think. Narrative preaching has come into vogue and reflects the reality that listeners in a television culture think with pictures in their heads" (10). While he may go

too far in giving room for narrative preaching, he rightly assesses 21st century culture. This culture is the world in which the expositor preaches. So not only does Robinson note that "as shepherds, we relate to the hurts, cries, and fears of our flocks," we must also understand the external issues to which our people are exposed every hour of every day. Along with this area of pastoral ministry in connection with preaching, Robinson also gives more room to the role and responsibility of the listener. He notes: Expositors may be respected for their exegetical abilities and their diligent preparation, but these qualities do not transform any of them into a Protestant pope who speaks ex cathedra. Listeners also have a responsibility to match the sermon to the biblical text. As Henry David Thoreau wrote, "It takes two to speak the truth -- one to speak, and another to hear." ... If a congregation is to grow, it must share the struggle (24). Robinson notes that the average listener in the pew hopes you will answer this one question: "So what? What difference does it make" (86)? Before this question is in the congregants' hearts, this question must be answered in the study as he asks, "Exactly what is the biblical writer talking about (66)?" The shared struggle starts with the preacher in the study as he wrestles with God to find out his intended meaning. Another strength in this work is the engaging humor Robinson employs in this volume. While many would consider reading a book on expositional preaching boring (even some preachers may feel this way!), Robinson's use of humor helps hook the reader in order that the reader may approach this material with ease. This example, though mentioned earlier, stands as a great example of opening up the very first chapter with humor: "This is a book about preaching, but it may have been written for a depressed market" (17). In the preface to the first edition, he makes this observation: If I can claim any qualification, it is this: I am a good listener. During two decades in the classroom I have evaluated nearly six thousand student sermons. My friends marvel that after listening to hundreds of fledgling preachers stumble through their first sermons, I am not an atheist (14). In another example after he acknowledges his debt to all who have influenced his thinking on expositional preaching, he closes the paragraph by noting, "Since all of these and others influenced me deeply, it is only fair that for weaknesses in this volume they should shoulder a large share of the blame" (15)! This brand of humor disarms the critic and relaxes those who initially approach the topic of expository preaching with any misgivings or fears. One weakness is a quote located in the Preface to the Second Edition about his view of women ministers, a view which has changed since his first edition in 1980. He notes: I've also changed my language to reflect my theology. God doesn't distribute gifts by gender. Both women and men have the ability and the responsibility to communicate God's Word. I have always believed that, but the language in my first book reflected a distinct male bias. . . . In this revision I hope I have demonstrated the fruits of my repentance (10). Robinson's theology is

on display when, in an explanation of how our outlines should have development, he plays the part of a listener who asks of the preacher, "What evidence does she have for that statement" (140)? Here again he opens the door for us to peer into his theological framework which allows for women ministers. If Robinson had titled this book, "Biblical Teaching," then the reader would understand the necessity for this revision. Many men and women in our churches teach, but the New Testament sets parameters on who teaches whom and where (1 Corinthians 14:33-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-13). For twenty-seven years however, this book has borne the title, "Biblical Preaching." When Robinson notes that the theology he has is "my theology," this reviewer is troubled by the use of the 'my.' For someone who claims to look to authorial intent, the description of his views seems too self-centered. This reviewer believes that his theology has strayed in this area from Scripture. Conclusion Robinson excels in bringing a topic which many would deem dry and gives it life by coupling his extensive homiletical and hermeneutical knowledge with picturesque wit. Aside from the one weakness mentioned above, this book is a must-read for every pastor and aspiring preacher of the Gospel.

This is the first book about preaching that I have ever read and because of the work of the Holy Spirit through Pastor Robinson by this book, I was able to deliver my first sermon with some semblance of boldness. Thank you for submitting to God by writing this great work. This book met me right where I am as a seminary student: academically, mentally, theologically, but most importantly spiritually. This book is comprehensive in that it covers most of what you think or would not even first think preaching involves. The most important thing is that Robinson spends the most time on the things that matter most, the spiritual preparation of the preacher and getting the meaning of the text right (to name a few)! Thankfully, his emphasis on the things that matter does not mean that he neglects other elements of preaching. He spends time on voice, dress, gesturing. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and was even prompted to have some devotional time with The Lord after some of the readings.

My son loves this book. Our Pastor, Robert Jeffress, suggested this for him.

Biblical Preaching is an excellent overall book on preaching, with heavy emphasis on the expository style. Robinson is a master preacher, and his lucid style and logical thinking is very evident in his writing. This is probably one of the best texts available for expository preachers. The first chapter is important, making a strong case for the value of expository preaching (which is vital, as the book really only covers this approach. Following chapters highlight the need to have a single main point

(supported or reinforced by sub-points) rather than a 7-bullet message, and talks about how to approach the Scripture in coming up with a sermon. Thankfully Robinson does discuss the need to consider your audience, the various valid shapes that sermons can take - even discussing inductive and semi-inductive approaches. The book concludes with a chapter on how to preach so people will listen along with some appendices that include solid example sermons. Robinson shows a good understanding of contemporary culture, discussing very thoughtfully the issue of gender in preaching, the cultural changes that affect how our listeners perceive our sermons, and taking a fairly broad understanding of what it means to be expository. The emphasis on having one main point in order to maximize the chance of life transformation (rather than conveying a lot of information) was a key takeaway from the book. This one is highly recommended for novice and seasoned preachers alike.

It lacked a procedure for deriving the Big Idea from a passage. However the concept of the Big Idea was superbly presented. I'm already applying the principles. Thank you for a wonderful contribution to Christian ministry.

Haddon Robinson presents one of the evangelical classics on preaching. The work represents the sum total of the traditional methods of homiletics and does it in a manner that will resonate with many expository preachers. For the most part, the work introduces little new information, but certainly does an excellent job repackaging the material for the modern expositor. Some of the new topics include the concept of a inductive message, which is still quite new for most preachers in conservative circles. Another helpful item in this work is its structure. The structure of the entire book is designed to give the expositor a number of stages to mark the progression from the text to the sermon. As a helpful secondary source, I would also recommend Bryan Chapell's *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*.

Robinson speaks to those who want to be better Biblical teachers and preachers in a very frank and personable way. He has insights from his own and other's years of experience that line up with any good speech class's principals of presentation. This book was purchased as a text book for a "Creative Biblical Communication" class.

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