

TheWordWorks

Expository Preaching Module 1: For the Preacher

Preaching at weddings

Aim of this module:

To know how to craft expository wedding sermons from a wide range of passages

Recap

See module "What is expository preaching".

Expository preaching teaches the author's **main point** in order to achieve the author's **purpose** in a **current day situation** similar to the situation of the original hearers

Resource

Most of the ideas in this module are taken from the following website:

<https://pastorpeterko.wordpress.com/2011/11/18/crafting-better-wedding-sermons/>

6 Guiding principles for crafting expository wedding sermons

1. The sermon should speak to the couple about their marriage relationship

That's what makes a wedding sermon different from any other sermon. 2 people are getting married and therefore, the sermon should address them and their marriage relationship in some way. The couple are the *primary hearers of the sermon* with their wedding guests as *secondary hearers* listening in.

2. Don't limit yourself to passages which speak about marriage

You don't have to stick to passages like Ephesians 5 which speak explicitly about marriage. A Christian marriage is the closest relationship between 2 Christians. Therefore, any passage which speaks about how Christians relate to each other is suitable for a wedding sermon.

Examples:

Philippians 2:1-8: Christians are to, in humility, consider others as more significant than themselves.

1 John 4:10-11: Christians are to love one another

Matthew 18:21-35: Christians are to forgive without keeping score

See Appendix 1 for some suggestions for wedding sermon passages.

3. Be faithful to the big idea (main point, purpose and situation) of the passage

A wedding sermon should be an exercise in expository preaching (see recap above). We want to be faithful to big idea of the passage so that the passage can have the same effect on our hearers as it did to its original hearers.

Example 1:

The Big idea of Philippians 2:1-8

The original situation: Paul calls the Philippian Christians to work together in gospel partnership to advance the gospel. This partnership can be destroyed by selfish ambition or conceit (Vs 3)

The main point: Humble Jesus considered us more significant than himself

The purpose: In humility, consider others more significant than yourself

How the big idea shapes the wedding sermon

The marriage relationship between 2 Christians is a gospel partnership. Selfish ambition or conceit by either husband or wife can destroy this partnership. In this context, consider your spouse more significant than yourself.

Example 2:

The Big idea of 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

The original situation: The Corinthian Christians were trying to outdo each other in impressiveness. The result was a church culture full of envy, boastfulness, arrogance, irritability and resentment.

The main point: No matter how impressive you are, you are nothing without love

The purpose: Stop trying to out-do each other. Love each other.

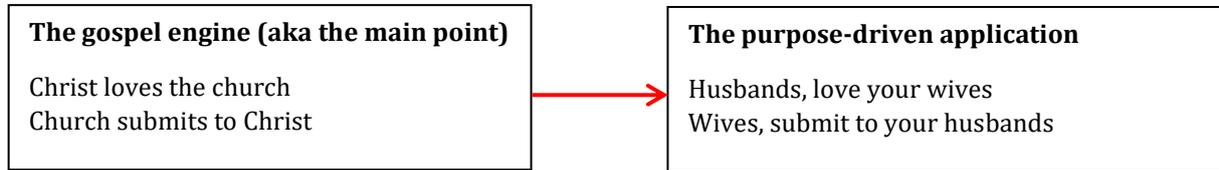
How the big idea shapes the wedding sermon

The marriage relationship can be one where husband and wife try to outdo each other. Envy, boastfulness, arrogance, irritability and resentment can poison such a marriage. God thinks you're a big nothing without love. So, stop the impressiveness arms-race and love each other.

4. All wedding sermons are evangelistic

All wedding sermons are evangelistic in the sense that it has the gospel at its motivational heart. Here's what I mean: the sermon's application (driven by the author's purpose) is primarily about how the couple should relate to each other in marriage (see Point 1 above). This application is almost always driven by a gospel engine.

Example: Ephesians 5:22-32



So, preach the gospel in a wedding sermon! That's the secret sauce!

5. Personalise the sermon with details about the couple

This is a great tip I picked up from the website given in the resource section above. Because the wedding sermon is primarily about the couple's relationship (See point 1 above), it makes the sermon much more interesting if the sermon has stories/anecdotes/insights about the couple. These could be stories about their courtship days, what they love about each other, challenges they faced in the courtship days, what they think marriage will be like etc.

Appendix 2 contains a list of questions from the website. These questions are sent to the couple in advance. They send the answers back separately. The answers can then be used in the sermon in the introduction, in the body of sermon to illustrate ideas and also in the application (to give concrete examples of how to apply).

6. Make it short and winsome

Everyone is there to celebrate a happy day. They're there to hear about the couple. Bring in the gospel and show how it makes a difference to their marriage relationship. But don't go on for 45 min exegeting passages in minute detail, showing everyone the theological significance of every other word. Keep it short (15 min is about right. 20 min is stretching it). Keep the manner winsome.

"I wish he could have expounded more forcefully and at greater length from the text" #saidnoonever

Appendix 1: Possible passages for wedding sermons

	Passage	Theme
1	Isaiah 54:1-8	God's compassion and love for his wife
2	Isaiah 62:1-5	God's delight/joy over his wife
3	Hosea 2:14-23	God's faithfulness towards his wayward wife
4	Psalms 45	Royal wedding psalm
5	Ecclesiastes 3:1-15	God works all things to reveal his beautiful plan in Jesus
6	1 John 3:14-23	Believing in Jesus and loving one another
7	Song of Songs 1:15-2:6	God celebrates love that is enchanting, exclusive and that satisfies/protects. God in Jesus shows this kind of love to us
8	Ephesians 5:22-32	Human marriage is a model of the marriage between Jesus and the Church. Submit & Love.
9	Genesis 2:15-25	Garden life ruined. New life through Jesus.
10	1 John 4:10-11	We love one another in the God-sending-Jesus-to-die-to-be-the-propitiation-for-our-sins way
11	Colossians 3:12-14	God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved put on new clothes
12	1 Corinthians 13:1-7	Love VS Corinthian divisions/infighting
13	Numbers 23:27-24:19	Show grace to each other the way God shows grace to his pesky people
14	Proverbs 5:15-23	Faithfulness satisfies. Unfaithfulness kills.
15	Philippians 2:1-8	Consider the other person more significant than yourself the way God does in Jesus
16	Song of Songs 8:6-7	Married couples relate to each other in an exclusive, all-in, full commitment way because love that can be expressed sexually is really powerful (strong as death, fierce as fire, cannot be bought). This is a picture of Jesus' strong love for the church.
17	Romans 5:1-2	In Christ, we have peace with God, we stand in grace and we have the hope of glory. Let Jesus be the centre of the marriage
18	Revelation 21:1-8	The ultimate wedding is between God, the ultimate husband and the church. Everyone has an ultimate choice to make: Take the FOC water of life and become God's bride OR reject God and be banished from his presence forever
19	Matthew 18:21-35	Show unlimited forgiveness because in Jesus God showed you unlimited forgiveness.

Appendix 2: List of questions sent to couple in advance

(from: <https://pastorpeterko.wordpress.com/2011/11/18/crafting-better-wedding-sermons>)

1. How did you meet and what were your first impressions?
2. When and how did you 'fall' for the other person?
3. How did the proposal happen? Details please!
4. What are some lessons you've learnt along the way in your courtship?
5. What does 'grace' mean to you in light of your courtship and marriage? [Question can be changed depending on the big idea of the sermon]
6. What's something amusing or funny about the other person that most people don't know about?
7. What's one thing about the other person you'll have to work hard to get used to/accept?
8. What's the most memorable time you've shared so far?
9. What's the funniest moment you've shared so far?
10. What special message would you like your wedding guests to take away from taking part in your special day?