

**Obligation of The Sermon
by Brian Chapell**

**A Précis
Submitted to Dr. Chip Moody
Phoenix Seminary
Scottsdale, Arizona**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
BC 501**

**by
Troy A. Griffitts
12-December-2006**

Mere facts lacking a unifying theme, purpose, and application do not form a sermon and will not give to an audience reason to listen. Though a sermon is made up of many contributing components, the focus should be on refining one major idea. Unity brings comprehensible focus to the infinite depths of Scripture. Aural conveyance cannot effectively communicate the level of detail acceptable in written communication. Without a supplied central idea, listeners will try to develop one of their own which will often not accommodate all the ideas of the preacher. When developing the unifying theme for a sermon, the pastor must derive this theme from either the primary, or some secondary intent of the author of the text, itself. Once this theme is exacted, it should be homogenized into a concise statement which will direct a sermon toward one central attack, and away from an outpouring of disconnected facts. Patience for refraining from teaching in one week all that one knows about a passage will allow a congregation to digest a little each sermon, rather than none in one. A sermon may have many points, but the main thing is to strive to keep the main thing the main thing.

Purpose and occasion for the written text by the Biblical author and, in a larger picture, by God, are keys for effective development of a sermon. God intends Scripture to complete some lacking daily need caused by our fallen condition. We must determine the need the Holy Spirit met in the original context and the need He wants to address in our church today. The later can become real to our parishioners if we use real life specifics to state our purpose, rather than generic abstract concepts. Addressing sin does not have to always be the purpose for our message; instead often, the Holy Spirit has cause to address some emotional longing or undeveloped skill. Though these specifics are determined by

a survey of today's audience, at hand, the personality of the preacher, and other occasions of the message, the selected purpose must ultimately be demonstrably addressed in the text. The faithfulness of the chosen purpose can be evaluated by considering what, and why a text was originally written, and how the new audience shares in the same occasion.

Scriptural truths must transform God's people. An audience has a right to ask why they just listened to you preach. The pattern seen in Scripture is that doctrine is taught for application. A well developed purpose to meet a need of a fallen congregation, when well articulated, will naturally bring to the mind of the hearer a welcomed application. As they understand their fatal condition, they will be driven to seek the power of their Divine Savior. A sermon's early surfacing of such needs leads the preacher to provide a solution, and thus a worthy and natural application true to the purpose of the text. A sermon without application breeds a frustrated waste of time for an audience.