

Hebrews as an expository sermon

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Abstract

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This paper specifically focuses on the Letter to the Hebrews – a New Testament book that can actually be regarded as a sermon. In the introduction of the paper the point of departure, that is the focus on the elements of the “sermon”, is justified. Furthermore, attention is paid to specific elements of preaching implied in the “sermon” in the Letter to the Hebrews and applicable to the practice of expository preaching. These elements include inter alia the structure in an expository sermon – the introduction, the body, and the conclusion – and the objectives of the sermon.. Issues like the spirituality of the preacher, his ministry by equipping the congregation by means of expository preaching, and his relationship to the congregation are also investigated, followed by final conclusions

Key concepts: *expository preaching; / equipping – congregation; / sermon – introduction, body, conclusion; / spirituality.*

Introduction

Within the context of this presentation, the concept *expository preaching* refers to the preaching of a smaller or bigger idea unit from the Scriptures (in other words, a sermon text). A prerequisite, however, is that the content of this idea unit must have touched the heart and mind of the preacher himself. Otherwise the preacher will not be able to contextualise the underlying truth of the idea unit for the congregation in their concrete situation (Venter, 2001, p.4). More recent literature in the field of Homiletics reflects a focus on research dealing specifically with expository preaching. The research focuses on various facets, including the history of expository preaching (Stitzinger, 1992, p.5-33), the elements of expository

preaching (Chapell, 1995, p.4-14), the authority in expository preaching (Allen, 2000, p.489-516), a closer reading of expository preaching (Bugg, 1993, p.415), and the issue of application in such a sermon (Willhite, 1992, p.355-369).

Within the scope of this presentation, elements that occur in examples of Biblical expository preaching are investigated. Denel (1991, p.125-138) analyses the elements of expository preaching that are to be found in the Old Testament and focuses specifically on Deuteronomy 31 and 32 and on the preaching of Ezra in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah (also compare Dennison, 1994, p.4). Lawson (2001, p.198-217) investigates Acts 2:42-47 for expository elements and Chapell (1995, p.4-14) gives attention to 1 Timothy 4 to provide a solid base for expository preaching.

It leaves one perplexed to find so little research done on the basis-theoretical elements found in the book of Hebrews, however. A few topics covered in completed research on the Letter to the Hebrews include the following: dimensions of congregational building (Venter, 1986), the theology of Hebrews (Lindars, 1991), the background of the book Hebrews (Hurst, 1990), and the motifs of *foreignership* and *fatherland* in Hebrews (Opperman, 1995).

Authors readily agree that Hebrews is most probably a homily to which a letter ending has been added (Grosheide, 195, p.42; Opperman, 1995, p.26). Coetzee (1986, p.25-27) goes one step further, however, when deducing from the broad structure of Hebrews that this is indeed an expository sermon – a sermon to encourage the congregation to persevere in the Christian faith (Hebrews 13:22-25).

Should researchers indeed widely regard Hebrews as a sermon, and should it be true that within the scope of Practical Theology, and Homiletics in particular, relatively little research has been done on Hebrews as a sermon, it reveals a topic in the field of Homiletics that begs to be researched. The aim of this article is consequently to identify possible homiletic elements of expository preaching in Hebrews, to outline these elements and define them with a view to the practice of expository preaching. As method of research is used analysis and interpretation, and the research hypothesis is that a closer investigation of homiletic elements in Hebrews would serve as guidelines for the compilation of expository sermons.

1. The element of sermon structuring

Homiletes are more or less unanimous that structure fulfils three functions in a sermon. It firstly adds to the power of a sermon (Long, 1989, p.92), secondly provides cohesion of the material that is treated and, thirdly stimulates logical progression – directing the sermon towards a certain objective (vid. Bae, 1991, p.18; Vines, 1985, p.104). If attention is devoted to the extended and the closer thought structure of the Hebrew sermon, the structure of the letter confirms the three functions of a sermon.

As sermon, Hebrews is structured meticulously and artfully, phrased in elevated language (Kistemaker, 1984, p.6). To provide an overview of the sermon, the structure analyses of a few authors are given.

2.1 Guthrie's structuring

Guthrie (1994, p.117) structures Hebrews as follows:

Introduction (1:1-4): God spoke to us through his Son

- The position of the Son compared to that of the angels (1:5-14).
- The position of the Son, our High Priest, in relation to the earthly sacrifice system, with as introduction: We have a sinless High Priest who has gone to heaven (4:14 - 10:18).
- Ending: We have a mighty High Priest who takes us into heaven (10:19-25).

2.2 Hewitt's divisions

Hewitt (1975, p.47-48) offers a somewhat broader division:

- The Son elevated above the angels (1:5 - 2:18).
- The Son elevated above Moses (3:1 - 4:13).
- The merciful and mighty High Priest (4:14 - 5:10).
- Spiritual progression (5:11 - 6:20).
- The Priesthood of Christ, his ministries and sacrifice (7:1 - 10:18).
- Encouragement and exhortation (10:19 - 12:29).
- Final, practical encouragement (13:1 - 25).

2.3 Coetzee's analysis

Coetzee (1986, p.8-9) analyses Hebrews into an even broader thought structure which will be applied in this paper. (The numbering and formatting initially used by Coetzee have been slightly altered – CJHV.)

2.3.1 Thought structure of Hebrews

Analysis of the thought structure of the Hebrew sermon

Theme: *Through/in Christ, we have already inherited the most wonderful things*

- *Therefore, **persevere** as is befitting the heirs to the promised perfect inheritance*

1:1 - 4 Introductory sermon base

Jesus through whom everything has been created, is King and Heir to all things.

1:5 - 10A *What we have inherited in Christ - as guarantee for and driving force towards that which we still have to inherit – the **explication**.*

- I. 1:5 - 2:18: Jesus – through suffering and humiliation was elevated to a *Name and a reign* more glorious and greater than that of the *angels* – He leads us to *full glory*.

2.3.2 Motifs in Hebrews

2.3.2.1 The motif of creation

- 1:4, 5 - 14 : A greater Name: Son, God, Lord.
- 2:1 - 4 : *Paraclesis*: "do not drift away..."
- 2:5 - 8a : A reign to which all things, also the world to come, are subjected.
- 2:8b - 18 : Through humiliation and suffering, for our sakes, to his glory, and to *our* glory (see vs. 10).

2.3.2.2 The motifs of exodus and entrance

- II. 3:1 - 16: Jesus – Son over God's House – more glorious than **Moses** – He makes of us participants, fellow-children in the house of God.

Paraclesis: 3:6 "Courage and hope *held on to till the end*".

3:12-15: "*not turn away from the living God ... if we ...hold firmly till the end*".

- 3:17 – 4:13: Jesus – *Provider of the true Sabbath-Rest for the People of God – greater than Joshua*.

Paraclesis: 4:1, 11: "Endeavour ... to *enter into the rest* ... and *not perhaps stay behind* ... by falling into disobedience".

- 4:14 – 10:18: Jesus – the **Great High Priest** – has opened the road to God's holiest throne once and for all.

Paraclesis as introduction: 4:14-16: "... Let us *hold firmly to the faith we profess* ... by approaching the throne of grace with confidence".

2.3.2.3 Cultic motifs

- 5:1 – 7:28: Jesus – greater than **Aaron** – being priest in accordance with the order of Melchizedek.

Extended paraclesis: 5:11 – 6:20: The necessity of becoming mature in our faith.

- 8:1 – 3: Jesus – Mediator of the **improved covenant** – better than the Old Covenant.
- 9:1 – 10:18: Jesus – *High Priest of the better, perfect, unique sacrifice* – in the true tabernacle.
- 10:19 – 13:19 : *B. The extended paraclesis – applicatio*

- 10:19 – 12:29 : *Persevere then*, so that you may be heirs to the *promised, perfect inheritance*.
- 13:1– 19 : Exhortation/Encouragement to a practical Christian way of life as a *praise offering* to God (see verse 15).
- 13:20 – 21 : *End to the Sermon*: It was a *logos tes parakleseos*.
- 13:22 – 25 : *End to the Letter*.

Since the purpose of this paper is to investigate basis-theoretical elements of expository preaching, one should take notice not only of the overview or thought structure of Hebrews, but also, and in particular, of the positioning within the structure of specific sermon elements, such as the explication/exposition and application. Coetzee's analysis of the thought structure, given above, has already made it clear that explication and application alternate in the Hebrews sermon (which strengthens the viewpoint that we are dealing with a sermon).

2.4 Explication and application according to Guthrie

Guthrie (1994, p.127-134) has studied the alternation and positioning of explication and application within the Hebrews sermon in particular. He indicates a certain movement in explication and application within the structure of Hebrews, that is presented as follows:

Explication	Application
Introduction (Hebrews 1:1-4) God spoke with us in/through the Son.	Application (Hebrews 2:1-4) Hold fast onto the Word that is heard. Do not drift away.
Hebrews 3:1-6 Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of faith.	Application (Hebrews 3:7-19) Those who disobey the Word, die in the desert.
Hebrews 4:3-11 The promise of rest for those who are obedient.	Application (Hebrews 4:12 – 13 and 14) Stay with the sharp, living Word. Hold onto the faith we profess.
Hebrews 5:11 – 6:3 The situation within the faithful community (Slow to hear).	Application The danger of becoming disloyal to the Christian faith.
Hebrews 6:4-8 Hebrews 6:9-12	Application Hebrews 10:26-32

The preacher's faith in those who listen.	The danger of rejecting God's truth and His Son.
Hebrews 11:1-40 The positive example of those who profess their faith.	• Hebrews 12:1-2 en 3-17 Persevere in the race of faith. Endure God's discipline.

Explication	Application
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hebrews 12:18 – 14 The benedictions of the new covenant. 	<p>Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hebrews 12:25-29 Do not reject God's Word. Hebrews 13. Cautioning on practical issues.
<p>Ending: Sermon of comfort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	

2.5 Conclusions on the above

From this overview of the extended structure, the thought structure, and the indication of the structure within which explication and application alternate in the Hebrew sermon, the following can be deduced:

- In expository preaching structure is necessary for the sake of cohesion and the logical progression of ideas.
- The pattern of presentation directly followed by application used in the Hebrew sermon is not only the key feature of the method of making a sermon, but also brings balance to the sermon. Exhortation without providing the grounds for such exhortation, relegates the sermon to mere moralism, as preaching merely about the grounds for exhortation without an applicable appeal, can lead the congregation to a false sense of rest about their faith.

"Through the reiteration of central motifs – encouraging words, warnings and examples – the author (i.c. preacher) repeatedly hammers home the reward of a right decision on the part of the community and the punishment awaiting those who make a bad decision" (Guthrie, 1994, p.139).

- When dealing with the importance of the sermon structure, the transitions occurring in Hebrews should also be indicated. Transitional expressions continuously follow after the explication to bring about cohesion between the explication and the exhortation. The following serve as examples of transitions: Hebrews 2:1 "therefore" (*dia touto*), Hebrews 3:1 "therefore" (*othen*), Hebrews 4:14 "while (therefore)" (*oun*), Hebrews 6:1 "therefore" (*dio*), Hebrews 10:19 "thus (therefore)" (*gar*), Hebrews 12:1 "While we then (therefore)..." (*Toigaroun kai ...*).

These examples of logical transitions do not only connect explication to exhortation, but also illustrate that explication and exhortation are basically one, like two sides of the same coin. Both explication and exhortation are part of the one movement of the Word that cuts into reality.

2. The element of sermon introduction

The introduction of a sermon has the same function as the entrance hall or porch of a house through which the guests enter the house. This is where the guests form their first impressions of the house. The entrance hall is, however, also a thoroughfare to reach the rest of the house in the shortest possible time.

The function of the introduction to a sermon is to bring the listener as fast as possible to the theme of the sermon, which is a summary of the kerugma of the sermon text. In other words, to bring each member of the congregation to the Word of God (vid. Bae, 1991, p.88). In essence, a good introduction to a sermon summarises all the main elements of the whole sermon, as does Lord's Day 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism which contains elements of all 52 Lord's Days of the catechism (Venter, 1991, p.50).

The introduction to a sermon also serves to convince the congregation that they can do nothing else but listen to the sermon that is to follow (Vines, 1985, p.140) and to understand the applicability of the theme or the sermon. Hebrews 1:1-14 forms the introduction to this sermon and a closer analysis of these verses clarifies the mentioned statements. This pericope firstly mentions one Speaker (God), but in two dispensations (vid. Kistemaker, 1984, .p.7).

Old Dispensation	New Dispensation
Many times	Once and for all
Many ways	One final way
God has spoken	God has spoken
in earlier times to the fathers through the prophets	now (in these last days) to us through the Son

The common factor in this comparison of the two dispensations is the emphasis that God has spoken. God discloses Himself audibly. As God finally spoke through the Son in the new dispensation, so the Son spoke through the apostles and the apostles wrote the Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. "God has spoken" thus relates directly to his self-disclosure which has been put to print in the Word (Venter, 1986, p.11).

The manner in which God speaks is also disclosed in this part. God has spoken many times (literally: in many parts) and still speaks. He does not say everything at once. His self-disclosure manifests planning and progression towards a specific point in time: from prophets to Son, from the past till now, and from the fathers to us. Through the ages God has bound his speaking to a specific situation and directed his words at people within that specific situation.

God spoke then and God speaks now, and whoever preaches should give God Himself the Word in expository preaching – and that in a well-planned manner (Adam, 1996, p.10).

Another line that also manifests itself in the introduction of the Hebrews sermon, and continues throughout the sermon, is stated in verse three: "After he had provided purification

for sins, ...". The expression *purify* has direct bearing on the high priest in the Old Testament, who first had to purify or cleanse himself before entering into the holy of holies to bring a sacrifice for the sins of the people. Christ the High Priest, does not have to purify himself - He purifies **us** of our sins. This line connects the introduction of the Hebrews sermon to the most crucial contents of the Scriptures and of every sermon: God has purified his people of their sins.

The content of the rest of verse 3, which reads "... he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" is also a continuing theme throughout the Hebrew sermon. This is the point of departure for describing Christ, the Victorious, as "more superior".

Guthrie (1994, p.27) describes this "more than" of Christ in the following structure pattern:

- Christ more than the prophets (1:1-3)
- Christ more than the angels (1:4 – 2:18)
- Christ more than Moses (3:1 – 4:13)
- Christ more than Aaron (4:14 – 10:18)
- Christ "the most superior" as a new and living way (10:19 – 12:29)

Lastly, in terms of homiletics, the attention is focused on the surprising element in the introduction. The body of the sermon is later focused on the work of our great High Priest, the rich inheritance we have received, and the exhortation to persevere in faith and hope. But at first glance, it does not seem to be what the preacher had in mind when he wrote his introduction.

However, the fact that the preacher introduces his sermon by relating directly to the situation of his listeners, forces them to listen to the progressive development of the sermon. The preacher connects his listeners directly to their past by stating that God has spoken to the fathers through the prophets in many ways. And then, stated in a rather descriptive manner, the preacher aims at saying: Now I am saying something that you have to hear, otherwise you will be that poorer. **Now** God is speaking to you, finally in His Son. And the good news (gospel) I wish to share with you is: He has purified you of your sins. He is now your King.

3. Elements of the body of the sermon

In the Hebrews sermon, these elements occur as *explicatio* and *applicatio* (vid. the structure analysis). In more recent homiletic literature, the *explicatio* is divided into two steps, "investigation" and "interpretation" (Vines, 1985, p.68-94), followed by the *applicatio*.

As has been stated under point 1, it is quite remarkable that in the Hebrews sermon the *explicatio* and *applicatio* constantly occur together in the different sub-sections of the sermon. In other words, no division is made between the two sermon elements of explication and application, in the sense that one application is placed right at the end, followed by the ending of the sermon. This unity between explication and application therefore implies that as a homiletic rule an expository sermon ought to offer the congregation explicatory application and applicable explication throughout the sermon.

Much insight is to be gained from more closely delineating the way in which the preacher implied in Hebrews applies what he explains. From a homiletic viewpoint, the telos (objective) of a specific sermon text should be identified through the process of exegesis, and more particularly by posing the question: Why did the Holy Spirit have this text written in this place in the Bible? From the telos of the pericope forming the sermon text, the objective the preacher has with the specific sermon is also formulated, for example, to exhort the congregation to ..., to comfort by ..., to more closely inform on ..., to indicate that ...

A closer analysis of the concepts used in the Hebrews sermon to indicate the application, at the same time identifies the objective of the specific part of the Hebrews sermon:

- After the explication of the sermon in chapter 1, the following words directly follow in chapter 2:1 "Therefore (for this reason) we must... **hold fast** (*prosechein*) (pay more careful attention) to what we have heard". Thus: one aim of the preacher was to have the **congregation hold fast**.
- A next objective of the sermon appears in the application of 3:1: "... **fix your thoughts** (*closely*) **on Jesus**".
- In Hebrews 3:12 the objective of the sermon appears in the following application: "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God".
- In Hebrews 4:1 the sermon finds its application in the following words: "let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it" and in verse 11 "make every effort".
- In chapter 5 and 6:1 the aim of the sermon becomes clear in the reprimands "you are slow to learn", and "let us leave the elementary teachingsand go on to maturity...".
- Of particular significance is that in the later chapters (chapter 12 in particular) the aim of the sermon changes to the exhortation to persevere. In chapter 12:1 the congregation is encouraged: "... and let us run with *perseverance* (*hupomoné*) the race marked out for us". It is important to note that the *hupomoné* of verse 1 is to be connected to Christ's perseverance ("endure/suffer the cross") in verse 3 (*hupemeinen*)!
- As ought to be clear from the explanation just given, the objective or aim of the text leads directly to the application of the text.
- Homiletically speaking, there should be *congruence* between the explication of the text and the application of the text.

4. The element of the sermon ending

With reference to the sermon ending, homiletes posit that a sermon ending should adhere to the following requirements: the ending should terminate the sermon; should not include any new material; should be formulated briefly, clearly and applicably, and be positive (Bae, 1991, p.163-172).

The sermon ending of Hebrews is found in chapter 13:20 and 21.

When these verses are analysed one finds various references to both the introduction and the body of the Hebrews sermon.

- Chapter 1:1 states that God is central (God has spoken)
- In chapter 13:20 it is accentuated again that God is central as God who gives peace.
- In chapter 1:3 it is stated that Christ purified us of our sins and then (after his resurrection and ascension) went to sit at the right hand of God.
- Chapter 13:20 offers a reference to both expressions in 1:3, namely "blood of the eternal covenant" and "brought back from the dead".
- In chapter 4:14 Jesus is called "**great high priest**" over the house of God.
- In the sermon ending he is called the "**great Shepherd**" of his sheep.

From the mentioned similarities it is reasonable to deduce that the Hebrews sermon, in its composition, manifests the pattern of a circle composition. What the preacher has started with, he ends with kerugmatically. Preceded by a wider application (chapter 13:1-20) during the course of the sermon, the preacher ties the main lines of the sermon together in the ending.

5. The element of the spirituality of the minister

Previously, homiletic research has been strongly directed at the sermon as such. More recently, however, the focus has moved to the preacher and to his personal life of faith in particular. This spirituality can also be described as the life of the preacher *coram Deo*; his life under the eyes of God (Velema, 1992, p.28).

Various nuances of spirituality have already been investigated, among others the grounding of spirituality (Venter, 1999, p.6-7; vid. Drane, 1997, p.332-340), the work of spirituality in the life of the preacher (Kim & Venter, 1998, p.175-176), and the practice of life before God (Paterson, 1997, p.21-24). A particular element of the preacher's pursuit of spirituality is to be found in his relationship with God through the Word, his reflection on the Scriptures, and his life of prayer. A certain dimension of this relationship, reflection and prayer is to be found in Hebrews 10:21 and 22. "...and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water".

The following aspects come to the fore in these verses:

- The foundation of our association with God is, on the one hand, to be found in the fact that we have a high Priest. As Priest, he gave himself as a sacrifice (vid. Hebrews 10:19 and 20). On the other hand, mention is made of our hearts *being cleansed* (a motif that has already been initiated in Hebrews 1). Our consciences have been completely purified. We may draw near to God as those who have been purified.
- The expression "to draw near to God" deserves closer scrutiny. The concept *proserchometha* is cohortative and thus implies a medium: we have a high priest, we have been purified, let us therefore draw near/approach by ourselves, and go in – to God. The Greek expression for *draw near* is the same as that which is used in the Septuagint when

the high priest of the Old Testament entered to pray and bring a sacrifice for the nation of Israel once a year. Going in to God had only one objective or purpose, that is to pray. The basis for this argument is to be found in Hebrews 4:16 where the same concept (draw near/enter) is used as follows: "Let us then *approach* the *throne of grace* with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need". The prayer is directed towards the receiving of grace.

- A further nuance in the element of the spirituality of the minister is found in: Let *us* then approach with confidence (*a* devout heart). *Us* is plural and *a* is singular. Thus: All of us can approach God, but in our heart each of us stands individually and alone before God! This is indeed why the condition holds that we have to approach with a devout (true, undivided) heart. In our approaching God mention is made not only of an undivided heart, but also of full certainty in faith, the certainty that leads to a whole, undivided life in the presence of God.

The focus here is on the personal life of faith of the minister and his attitude towards God, here in particular where mention is made of the one source of spirituality, that is especially a life of private prayer.

6. The element of equipment towards growth/development through preaching

The element of equipment towards growth through preaching is also found in Hebrews. In Hebrews 3 equipment appears as an aspect of building. "God is the *builder* of everything" (3:4) and : "Every *house* is built by someone". Building is also mentioned in the last chapter of Hebrews (13:21) when the preacher prays for the Hebrews: "May this God*equip* you with everything good for doing his will". Equip is here related to doing the will of God.

Becoming equipped through the Word appears very prominently in Hebrews 6:1(a), however. What is written here can be descriptively paraphrased as follows. We (the preacher), want to explain the more difficult things of Scriptures to you, but you are slow (lazy, apathetic, insensitive) to understand. The big problem is that you have to be fed with milk. You have been believers for such a long time that you should have been instructing others by now. However, in the meantime, we cannot nurture you with solid food. You have not grown. Like an infant, you cannot differentiate between good and evil.

The fact that the congregation should indeed be fed by the Word is clearly stated in Hebrews 6:1, in the expression "... let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity".

7. The element of the preacher's relationship with the congregation

Homiletes place strong emphasis on the definite influence the relationship in which the preacher stands towards the congregation has on the preaching (Vines, 1984, p.32; Willhite, 1992, p.355; Pieterse, 2001, p.28).

The key question here is whether any mention is made, on a basis-theoretical level, in the Letter to the Hebrews, of the relationship between preacher and congregation.

This issue is the focus of Hebrews 6:9-12. The Hebrews preacher seldom uses any form of address for the congregation in his sermon. Here, however, he uses the concept "dear friends". This form of address has to be viewed in context. From Hebrews 6:4-8 he starts reprimanding the congregation sharply – like lightning, Calvin says (see Calvin, 1972, p.85). With the expression "dear friends" the preacher indicates that he still loves them dearly, since both preacher and congregation share in the same purification work of the great High Priest. Precisely because he stands in a relationship of love to the congregation, he can reprimand sharply, but can also profess sincere appreciation: "Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case – things that accompany salvation" (verse 9). The appreciation is followed by, "... God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them" (verse 10). At the heart of the preacher's relationship with his congregation is this idea: you are loved ones who have already shown your love for you fellowmen.

8. Summary of basis-theoretical elements with a view to expository preaching

- A sermon should be structured to form a unity, which promotes cohesion and logical progression in the sermon, particularly by using fluent transitions between paragraphs.
- Applicable explication and explicable application should continuously – and not in isolation – appear in a sermon, because explication and application are basically parts of the same movement of the Word that penetrates reality.
- The introduction of the sermon should contain the core of the elements that will be explained in the sermon.
- Sermon objective(s) should be formulated from the telos of the sermon text and should be formulated congruently with the exposition in the application.
- Ideally, the sermon ending should link with the sermon introduction and thus form a circle composition.
- The quality of the preacher's personal life faith and his devotion to God determines the quality of his preaching to a great extent.
- The positive equipment of the congregation can take place when the sermon also focuses on growth deficits in the congregation's life of faith..
- The preacher, who loves his congregation and shows this love to them, can also reprimand the congregation sharply. Love and reprimand are mutually inclusive.

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