

# Genre-Sensitive Expository Preaching

Session One:

The Case for Expository Preaching

**Singapore Bible College Seminar by Dr. Jeffrey Arthurs in July 2014**

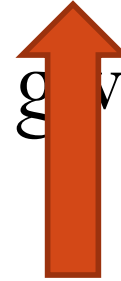
**Preaching Professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary**

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# Preaching as Soul-Watching

(Hebrews 13:17) Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.



## 1 Timothy 4:16

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by doing so, you will save both yourself and your hearers.





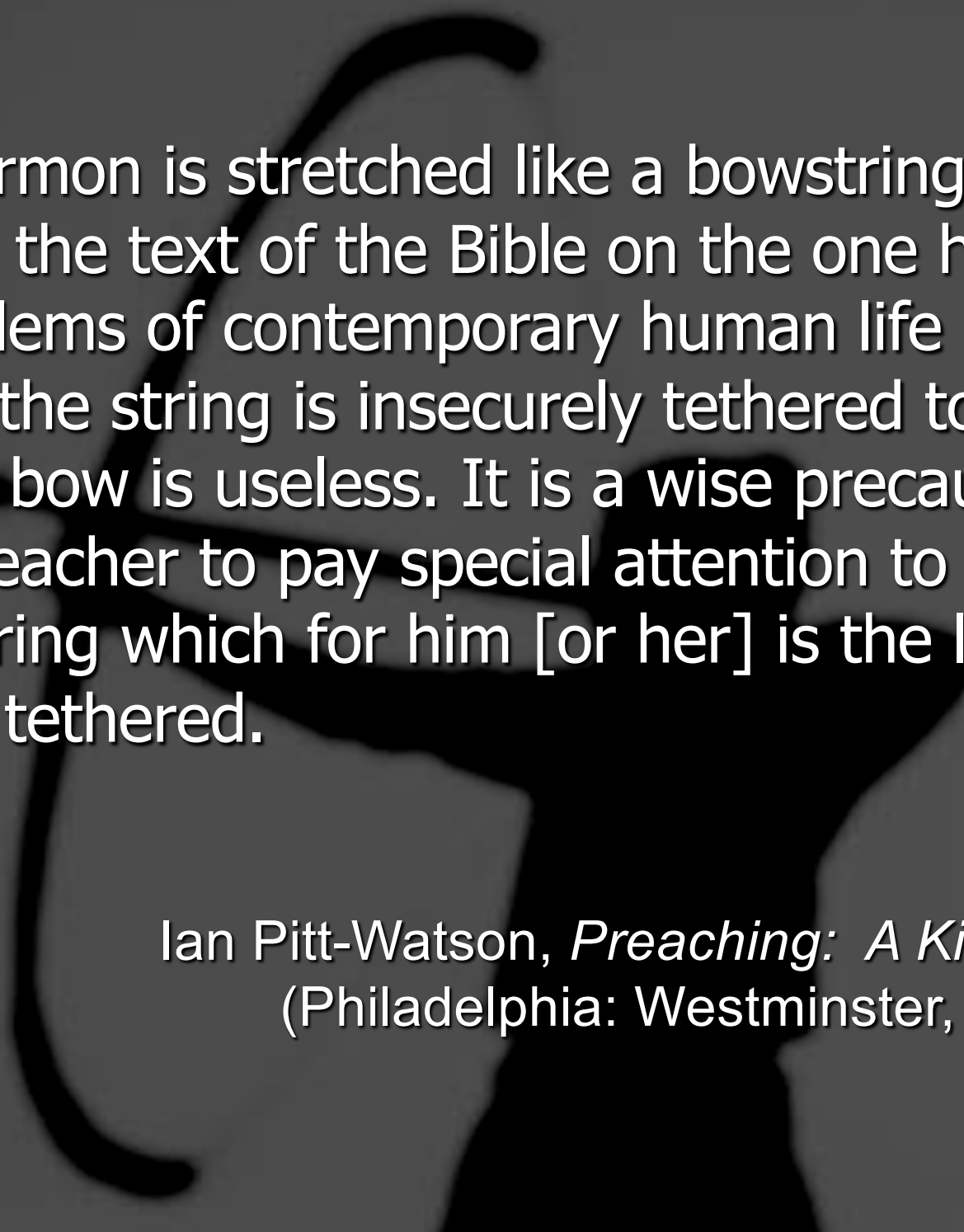
# Expository Preaching is NOT . . .

- **A Lecture**
- **A Style**



**Expository Preaching is saying what  
the text says and doing what the  
text does.**



A dark silhouette of a person holding a bow, positioned behind the text. The person's arms are extended, holding the bow horizontally. The bowstring is taut, and the bow is pointed towards the right. The background is a dark, solid color.

Every sermon is stretched like a bowstring between the text of the Bible on the one hand and the problems of contemporary human life on the other. If the string is insecurely tethered to either end, the bow is useless. It is a wise precaution for every preacher to pay special attention to the end of the string which for him [or her] is the less securely tethered.

Ian Pitt-Watson, *Preaching: A Kind of Folly*  
(Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 57.

# Arthurs' Definition

(from *Preaching with Variety*)

Accurately heralding the Word of God to a  
particular audience for a  
particular purpose by  
explaining, applying, and embodying that  
message.

**Expository preaching is saying  
what God says and doing what  
God does.**

# Literature and Rhetoric

- Group Discussion: Define “literature.”
- 4 minutes.
- Groups of 4 or 5.

# Common features in definitions of literature:

- Universal quality.

## The Universal Quality of Literature

The poet's job is not to tell you what happened, but what happens . . . . He gives you the typical, recurring, or what Aristotle calls universal event. . . . You wouldn't go to *Macbeth* to learn about the history of Scotland—you go to it to learn what a man feels like after he's gained a kingdom and lost his soul.

Northrop Frye, *The Educated Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 63–64.

# Common features in definitions of literature:

- Universal quality.
- Marked by seriousness of thought and/or beauty of form.
- Heightened emotion.
- Imagery.

# Definitions of “Rhetoric”

- **Aristotle:** Rhetoric is . . . discovering the available means of persuasion.
- **Cicero:** Speech designed to persuade.
- **Augustine:** Rhetoric is the art of expressing clearly, ornately (where necessary), persuasively, and fully the truths which thought has discovered.
- **Francis Bacon:** Rhetoric is the application of reason to the imagination for the better moving of the will.

# The Bible As Rhetoric

**Bernard Ramm: “Holy Scripture is not a theoretical book of theological abstraction, but a book that intends to have a mighty influence on the lives of its readers.”**

*Protestant Biblical Interpretation, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 113.*

**John Sailhamer: “A text is . . . an embodiment of an author’s intention, that is a strategy designed to carry out that intention.”**

*Introduction to Old Testament Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 46-47.*

# Genre:

One way literature and rhetoric intersect

**Literature**

**Rhetoric**

**Genre**



# The Bible as Literature and Rhetoric

- These two qualities come together in a study of genre.
- Each genre has its own literary form and each literary form has a rhetorical effect on the careful reader.
  - For example, Psalms use parallelism and figurative language.

# The Rhetorical Impact of the *Form* of Hebrew Poetry

Where shall I go from your Spirit?  
Or where shall I flee from your presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, you are there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!  
If I take the wings of the dawn  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me.

# The Bible as Literature and Rhetoric

- These two qualities come together in a study of genre.
- Each genre has its own literary form and each literary form has a rhetorical effect on the careful reader.
- Thus the expository preacher (who says what the text says and *does what the text does*) will let the form of the text influence the form of the sermon.

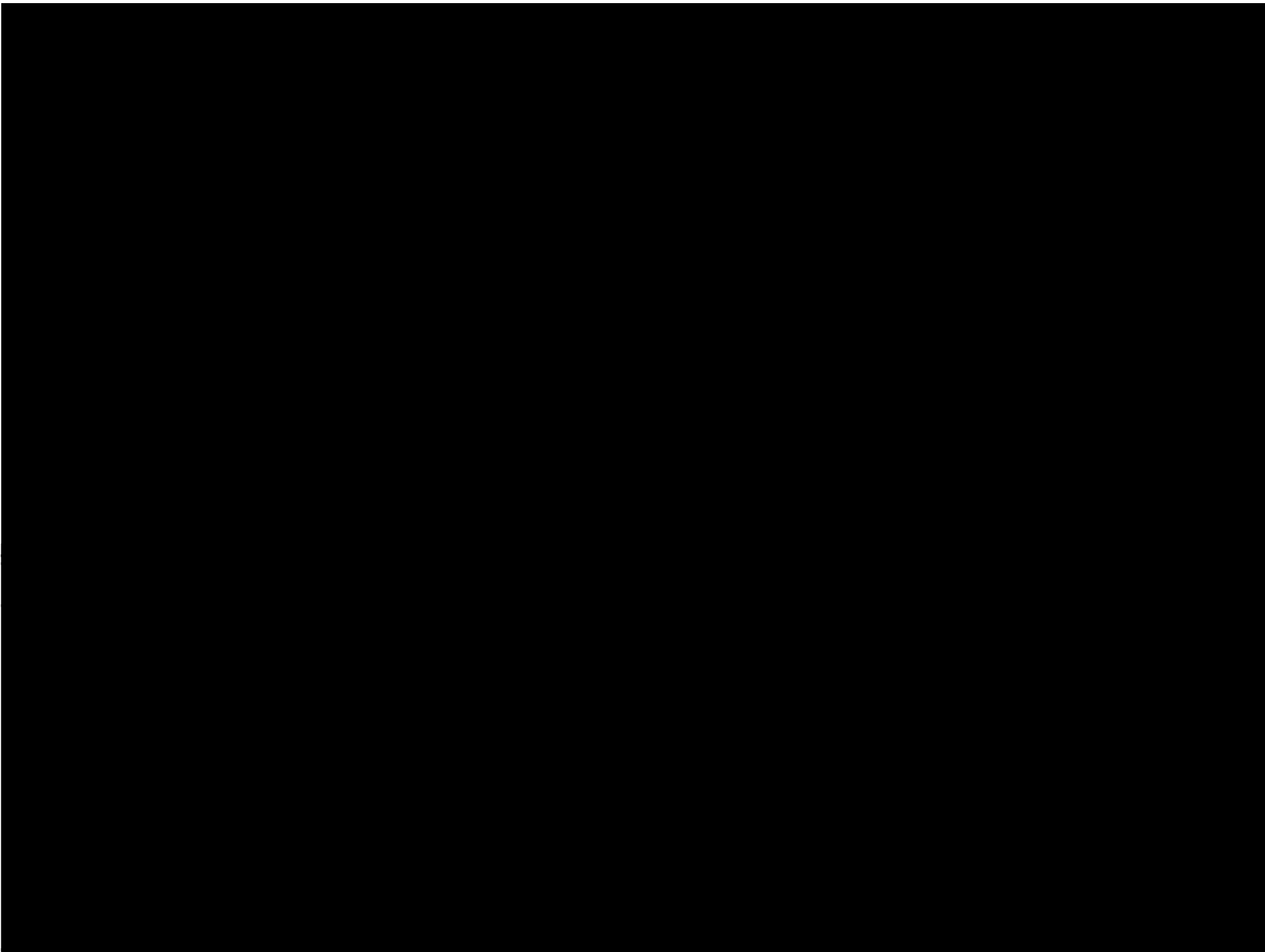
# Timothy Keller's “Tri-Perspectival Homiletic”

(from the course “Preaching Christ in a Post Modern World”)

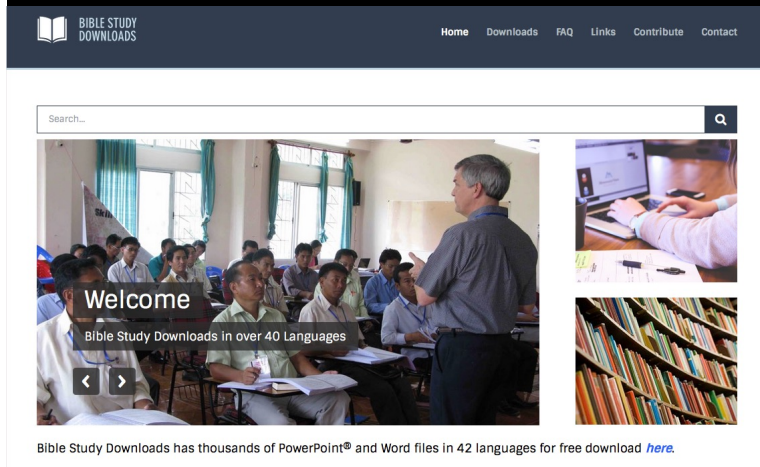
- Exposition
- Application
- Sensation

## Summary

- Expository preaching is not a lecture or style.
- It is saying what God says and doing what God does in a biblical text.
- The Bible is literature and rhetoric, and these qualities come together in a study of genre.
- Each genre has its own literary form and each form has its own rhetorical effects.
- So genre-sensitive expository preaching lets the form/effects of the text influence the form/effects of the sermon.



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