

Preaching Practicum

Dr. Steve Schell | October, 2020 | Week 3 Class Notes

Why Preach Through a Book of the Bible?

- The question is: who will pick the topics for my sermons? Me or God?
- By going through a book and not skipping over the hard or unpleasant subjects, we will regularly preach on topics we would never choose to preach on otherwise.
- You will frequently feel the “burden” of what you must preach.
- And yet, you will find that the pain of this process brings you life. You can externally feel His pleasure rest on you as you speak. You sense that you really are God’s representative speaking His truth into a troubled world.
- “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing” (Dt. 25:4; 1Co 9:9; 1 Tim 5:18).
- The preacher must spiritually be fed by the process of feeding others. In fact, we are the primary recipient of each message.
- We deliberately set ourselves on a course of lifelong learning, of growing continually deeper in understanding and faith.
- As you gather the information needed to understand a book, suddenly passages in other books or confusing concepts make sense. You discover a “key” that unlocks a hidden truth.
- You develop personal relationships with the people you are studying. You “ride along in their pocket.” You watch Jesus, Paul, Moses, David, etc. They become your mentors. You begin to understand how they think. You fall in love with them. And as you preach, so does your congregation.
- When you preach through a book, the responsibility for what you are saying shifts off of you and onto the Bible. You didn’t pick this topic; the Bible did.
- You are the messenger, not the Source of the message, and people feel that.
- This is very empowering. You wear a yoke of authority. It overrules other factors that might undermine your authority (youth, lack of formal training, etc.).
- Common objections to preaching through a book: we only have the average person for three years, so if I spend years preaching through a book, they will miss many important themes taught elsewhere.
- Actually, you can’t teach through any book of the Bible without addressing most or all of the major themes.
- Won’t people get bored? Only if you stop applying each lesson to their lives. If you teach but don’t apply, you will bore people no matter what you preach.
- The real reasons: 1) It is hard work. It requires many hours each week in study and prayerful reflection. This requires careful scheduling and equipping others to do much of the pastoral care. 2) It depends on God to reveal new insights every week and that requires faith that He will and the personal disciplines to stay in the Spirit. 3) We recognize that there are passages in each book we don’t have a clue what they mean and are afraid that when we come to those passages we will look like fools.

- We must become convinced that the effort to research these difficult passages is worth it, and that there is life in every verse of the book; God wants us to understand all of it and is committed to helping us at every step in the process.
- What about special seasons, local and national events, special needs in the congregation? These interruptions to preaching through a book are not a problem whatsoever. They are part of the life of a healthy church. You simply return to the book you are teaching when they pass.