

## A More Biblical Approach To Teaching In The Church



Verse-by-verse commentary (VBVC) is the expected method of preaching or teaching through the bible in most (if not all) churches claiming a high view of Scripture. It is also the method taught by seminaries to those being trained as pastors in such churches. Though based on good intentions, it fails in several respects. The purpose of this study will be to consider its weaknesses as well as its more biblical alternative.

### 1. The weakness of (VBVC) method:

1.1. It makes teaching the entire bible in one pastor's or congregation's lifetime unrealistic/impossible.

There are 31,102 verses in the modern Bible (per Estienne numbering). This works out to roughly 26 verses per chapter. A sermon lasting 60-80 minutes under the (VBVC) method can ideally cover between 5-6 verses. At this pace, it would take 5 weeks to cover one chapter. Given there are 1,189 chapters in the Protestant Bible (per Geneva chaptering), means it would take 114 years to preach through the entire bible. Cutting this in half – or by 75 percent, creates no less a daunting scenario (57 years, 28.5 years<sup>1</sup>). The preaching of John MacArthur, a strong supporter of this form of teaching, offers a more realistic example. In 2011, he finished preaching through the New Testament (only). It took him 42 years.

1.2. It causes most pastor's to fail in their discipleship duties to their congregation (Mat 28:20).

1.3. It leads to myopic misinterpretation of the immediate context or primary preaching text.

The extended period of time it takes to get through a chapter, often leads to forgetting the larger context of the author's communication in the chapter or book itself. This in turn means myopic misinterpretation of the immediate context or primary preaching text. To utilize the old saying, "you lose the forest for the trees." The result is contradiction not only with the rest of Scripture, but often within the book itself (e.g. Rom 8:35-39 = Protected by Christ, so you can't lose your salvation w/11:22 = Be careful or you will lose your salvation; 1Th 1:4 = Paul knows these individuals have been elected/chosen to be permanently/eternally saved w/3:5 = Paul worried that their salvation possibly lost).<sup>2</sup>

1.4. It encourages the congregation to lose interest in studying the bible (b/c it takes so long).

1.5. It is foreign to the preaching of the New Testament or the early church.

There are no examples of this kind of preaching in the NT or the early church.

### 2. The more biblical alternative:

2.1. **Journaling in Practicum** = CCC members (1<sup>st</sup> grade and older) will read a chapter each day of the week. They will then list all the instruction/truths they think are established by that chapter in their journal/journaling bible (\$35 reimbursement to all members 1<sup>st</sup> grade and older who purchase one). Monday through Wednesday their reading and journaling will be from the Old Testament (3 chapters total), Thursday and Friday from the New Testament (2 chapters total). All members will read according to order presented below. All members (1<sup>st</sup> grade and older) are expected to participate in the journaling program. Pastor will exposit from and compare his list to yours in Practicum as well as attempt to answer questions. Practicum will be from 10-11am (Worship 11:15am).

NT			OT			
(top-bottom, left- right)			(top-bottom, left- right)			
Matthew	Romans	2Corinthians	Genesis	1Chronicles	Micah	Haggai
1John	Acts	Colossians	Job	Psalms	Isaiah	Zechariah
2John	1Thessalonians	Mark	Exodus	Proverbs	Hosea	Ezra
3John	2Thessalonians	Ephesians	Leviticus	Song Of Solomon	Nahum	Nehemiah
Philippians	Revelation	Jude	Numbers	Ecclesiastes	Habakkuk	Malachi
Hebrews	1Timothy		Deuteronomy	2Chronicles	Zephaniah	Esther
Philemon	2Timothy		Joshua	1Kings	Jeremiah	
Luke	Titus		Judges	2Kings	Lamentations	
Galatians	James		Ruth	Joel	Ezekiel	
1Peter	John		1Samuel	Jonah	Obadiah	
2Peter	1Corinthians		2Samuel	Amos	Daniel	

(8/11-15: M= Gen 1, T=Gen 2, W= Gen 3, Th= Mat 10, F= Mat 11; 8/18-22: M= Gen 4, T= Gen 5, W= Gen 6, Th= Mat 12, F= Mat 13)

<sup>1</sup> To accomplish either of these assumes not a change in the method, but rather the frequency with which it takes place in a given week. Cutting the time in half or by 75% would require the same magnitude of book study be done twice a week and/or four times a week respectively.

<sup>2</sup> See Doug Moo and R.C. H. Lenski's commentaries on Romans and Leon Morris' commentary on 1Thessalonians.

### 2.1.1. Examples of journaling (listing the instruction/truths established):

#### 2.1.1.1. **Matthew 9**

1. God has given His ministers the authority to forgive sins (1-8)
2. Churches appointed by God realize how important it is to spend time discipling those among the congregation who are spiritually weak and seeking help (9-13)
3. True disciples are always willing to change when God and the circumstances require it (14-17)
4. Jesus only helped those who were teachable (18-31)
5. Exercising demons thru gospel preaching is a part of legitimate ministry (32-35)
6. God's people need shepherds to keep them from getting jacked up (36-38) (Mal 2:6-7 w/Eph 4:11-16; "Say No To Solo Scriptura")

#### 2.1.1.2. **Hosea 1**

1. If the church/covenant community allows for the practice of sin (versus removing such individuals) the consequences are they no longer exist as God's church/kingdom (1-4)
2. Without the church, there is no salvation (5-6)
3. Without the church, there is also no Christians (8-9)

#### 2.1.1.3. **Psalms 66**

1. The gospel truth of Abundant Life (1-12)
2. The gospel truth of Lord Before Savior (16-20)
3. The gospel truth of Covenant Community (13-15)

### 2.1.2. Advantages:

2.1.2.1. The entire Bible w/b expounded/discussed/taught every 6 years (1x thru the OT, 2 ½x thru the NT).

2.1.2.2 Pastors and parents are provided the ideal resource (and metric) for discipling and disciplining – or engendering love for God in those under their care since we (pastors/parents) are meditating on the same texts (Gen 6:5-9; Eph 6:4).

2.1.2.3 We are provided w/common ground for spiritual discussion and encouragement during fellowship (Eph 5:17-20; Col 3:16).

2.1.2.4. God's Word will be established in every members' heart and mind fostering wisdom and faithfulness, greater ability to share w/others and defend what we believe (Psa 1:1-6, 119:11, 30, 34, 97-98, 130; Rom 12:3; 1Ti 4:13-16; 2Ti 2:14-15, 3:15-16).

**2.2. Discipleship Preaching in the Pulpit** = Systematic, contextually-driven exposition of those scriptural texts (the pastors believe) to be most relevant or needful to our overall understanding of God's Word and the gospel or our spiritual health and growth at that particular time.

### 2.2.1. Advantages:

2.2.1.1. This form of preaching/teaching allows the pulpit to become a direct extension of the shepherding process rather than simply the result of where we left off in a book (which may or may not have any impact on the lives of those in attendance).

2.2.1.2. This is the only form of preaching/teaching we see in the New Testament (for example):

2.2.1.2.1. Jesus (e.g. Sermon on the Mount address: Mat 5-7 = discipleship preaching addressing those issues most relevant to His audience ["You have heard that it was said"]) and covering a wide range of texts in the Scripture)

2.2.1.2.2. Paul = (e.g. Mars Hill: Act 17, his epistles: Rom, 1 and 2 Co, Gal, Eph, Col, 1 and 2 Th, 1 and 2 Ti, Tit, Phm = discipleship preaching addressing those issues most relevant to His audience and covering a wide range of texts in the Scripture)

2.2.1.2.3. Peter (e.g. Pentecost: Act 2, his epistles: 1Pe and 2Pe = discipleship preaching addressing those issues most relevant to His audience and covering a wide range of texts in the Scripture)

2.2.1.3. This is the form of preaching/teaching that has had the greatest impact on culture/society

*"Any list of the 10 sermons which have most decisively influenced culture and society consists mostly if not entirely of topical sermons."* – D.A. Carson

2.2.1.4. Lack of this form of preaching/teaching is why there is so much heresy and missing of the true gospel in the church.

This was true in Jesus' day just as it is now. The Jewish people failed to recognize Jesus b/c their leaders were not systematizing those aspects of His Messiahship so as to possess an accurate picture of Who He was and what His ministry would consist of. IOW: discipleship preaching/teaching was lacking and so also the people's spiritual discernment. Hence the reason for Jesus taking the time to do this kind of preaching and systematizing (e.g. Luk 24:27; also Joh 5:39)

2.2.1.5. This form of preaching/teaching does the best at demonstrating the sufficiency of Scripture to handle/answer all issues/questions

And what better time to do it than when we have our greatest attendance (the pulpit/worship service) (1Co 14:23-25).