

# PREACHING FOR IMPACT

ADRIAN ROGERS



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Adrian Rogers

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# CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
The Sermon’s Exposition.....	3
The Sermon’s Preparation.....	17
The Sermon’s Illustration .....	42
The Sermon’s Presentation.....	59
The Sermon’s Invitation.....	74
Appendix One: Q&A with Pastor Adrian Rogers.....	90
Appendix Two: Sample Sermon - “How to Be a Fully Committed Disciple of Jesus Christ”.....	95

# INTRODUCTION

## **PASTOR TO PASTORS**

Pastor Adrian Rogers impacted multiple generations for Jesus Christ by presenting profound biblical truth with simplicity, candor, and authority (and, yes, a little bit of humor). He began his ministry at age 19 and pastored for more than a half century. He pastored one of the largest churches in North America, consulted and prayed with five U.S. Presidents, and preached at Crusades on four continents.

Still, outside of his ministry to his own family, Pastor Rogers would say that one of his greatest joys was serving as a “pastor to pastors.” He loved mentoring and teaching pastors, especially in the art of developing and delivering sermons.

The material in this book is extracted from the teaching series, “What Every Pastor Ought to Know,” available through the Adrian Rogers Center for Biblical Learning at Love Worth Finding Ministries.

Love Worth Finding was founded in 1987 as the broadcast ministry of Adrian Rogers and remains the exclusive provider of his comprehensive teachings today. The ministry has expanded to provide digital, radio, TV, and print resources and training materials worldwide, all with the aim of bringing people to Christ and maturing them in the faith. This

includes a nearly endless supply of resources for pastors and congregations.

It is our hope that this book will be a blessing to pastors, Sunday school teachers, and others who are studying and communicating the Word of God, and that readers will come back for more resources they can use to share the greatest Love worth finding, Jesus Christ.

Find us at **[lwf.org](http://lwf.org)**.

# THE SERMON'S EXPOSITION

*“It is not your job to fill the pew. It is your job to fill the pulpit. When you fill the pulpit, the rest of it is in God’s hands.”*

ADRIAN ROGERS

**W**e hear so much about expositional preaching these days, in seminars, podcasts, and in books. But what does it really mean to preach in an expositional way? As pastors, how do we preach in such a way that we can make the greatest impact?

Peter says, in 1 Peter 5:2, “Feed the flock of God, which is among you.” Now that word *feed* literally means “to shepherd the flock of God.” It comes from the *verb form* of the *noun word* for a shepherd.

You are a pastor, and because you are a pastor, you’re a shepherd. Just as a pastor is a shepherd to his flock, your church members are the flock for which God has made you the shepherd.

## QUALITIES OF A GOOD PREACHER/SHEPHERD

Let's consider some qualities that you're going to need to be a good preacher and a good shepherd. First of all, the shepherd **guards the flock**. In Acts 20:29, the Apostle Paul was talking to the Ephesian elders, and he says this, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock." If you're a shepherd, you know that there are those that would steal your sheep.

There are those that would devour your sheep, and those that would harm your sheep, and you have to guard your flock constantly. Of course, one of the best ways you can guard your flock is through good preaching.

In addition, the shepherd not only guards the flock but also **guides the flock**. You are the shepherd. A shepherd is to feed and lead, and the people are to swallow and follow. As the shepherd, there are certain things you don't take a vote on. In John 10:27, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice. I know them; and they follow Me."

So the shepherd guards the flock, the shepherd guides the flock. And, you are to **feed the flock**.

Did you know that hungry sheep will bite one another? You have to keep your people fed and full of the Word of God to keep them healthy and to keep them in unity.

This is also true on the battlefield. If you don't have a challenge for your people, they're going to turn on one another. Do you know when soldiers get in a fight with each other? Not on the battlefield, but in the barracks. On the battlefield, they stand shoulder to shoulder and back-to-back. But, during their free time, they often get into scuffles with each other.

Similarly, you have to keep your people out there leading, working, serving, and dreaming. The way to do that obviously is to feed them. Healthy sheep, enjoying good pasture and plenty of grass, are not going to bite and devour one another.

Consider Acts 6:3, which teaches us about deacons. “Wherefore brethren; look ye out among you seven men of honest report full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom whom we may appoint over this business.”

What was this business? It was, in that particular case, feeding widows. The deacons are not the business managers of the church. They are the servants to do such things as to wait on tables, serve others, and care for the needs of the church.

As the apostles (shepherds), we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Prayer is more important than preaching and preaching is more important than administration. The two top priorities for an effective pastor are prayer and the ministry of the Word of God.

But, what about all of the hype about being seeker-sensitive and market-driven? We hear less about being Bible-based and Christ-centered and more about meeting the needs. Please understand, it is not your job to fill the pew. It is your job to fill the pulpit. When you fill the pulpit, the rest of it is in God’s hands.

I’ve been ministering for a long time. Every church I’ve ever pastored has grown—I mean, doubled, tripled, quadrupled. That’s a blessing. I don’t say that boastfully, but I give this testimony: the Word of God will get the job done. The Word of God will get the job done!

Now, you can build an organization apart from strong Bible preaching, but you cannot build a New Testament church apart from strong Bible teaching. So, the need today is for expository preaching.

## WHAT IS EXPOSITORY PREACHING?

Some people think that expository preaching is taking a chapter, or a paragraph in a chapter, and explaining it. That is not expository preaching. When you go get your lexicon and you discover what every word means, and you give the geographical and the sociological background of that passage of Scripture, and you explain it verse, by verse, by verse, and you say you're an expository preacher. No, you're not.

As a matter of fact, that kind of preaching will build a church right on down. People will get tired of it. Exposition is not pure exegesis, but it is a matter of a scholarly effort that has aim and development that comes out of one passage of Scripture. Truly, there are so many things that a passage of Scripture can teach. True exposition finds what you want to teach from a particular passage in a particular message.

None of us has ever squeezed all the juice out of the gospel grape. But what we have to do is to find out what God wants us to do and what God wants us to teach.

Expository preaching is taking a chapter, or a book, or a paragraph, or a verse and finding a theme that comes directly out of that chapter, out of that paragraph, or out of that book. You then draw it out and preach it. There are many various kinds of exposition, and you don't have to get locked into one particular kind.

Let me give you a general statement about what exposition is. Exposition is explanation, argumentation, illustration, application, and motivation. It is taking a passage of Scripture, finding a theme in that passage of Scripture, and explaining it—explanation, argumentation, illustration, application, and motivation.

Now, 2 Timothy 4:2 says, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” You cannot have a New Testament church without good exposition of the Word of God.

Somebody gave me a book from Dr. Vance Havner. I knew him personally and traveled with him. At one point I asked him, “Dr. Havner, how many points should a sermon have?” He said, “At least one.” Then, he said, “The Bible doesn’t say, ‘How shall they hear without a brass band?’ It says, ‘How shall they hear without a preacher?’” (Romans 10:14).

As a pastor, you need to learn to do exposition. It’s going to save you a lot of time. As exposition goes up in the pulpit, counseling goes down in the office. You can do so much preemptive counseling just by opening the Word of God. There’s power in the Word. I’ve found this over the years. It is an open secret.

## WHAT DOES THE WORD OF GOD DO?

Let me remind you again what the Word of God does. To begin with, **the Word of God convicts**. The Bible reproveth. In 2 Timothy 4:2, we read, “Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” The Bible brings about conviction!

God says in Jeremiah 23:29, “Is not My word like a fire?” says the Lord, “And like a hammer *that* breaks the rock in pieces?” Did you know, you can take a hammer and begin to tap on a rock? I didn’t mean strike it, just tap on it. Just keep tapping and tapping and tapping, and the hardest rock will split.

That's an amazing thing. God's Word is like that hammer. I've seen people come to listen to me. They stayed up late one night and watched some unreliable preacher, or they've read about the pedophile or adultery cases in the pastorate. They've been disillusioned by other pastors who've lowered the flag. For this reason, many of our church prospects are now suspicious of the Church; they're rather cynical and secular, and they wonder if they can trust us.

But I have found that when you get up Sunday, after Sunday, after Sunday, after Sunday and open the Word of God, the hardest rock will crack. The Word of God reproves and it convicts.

Secondly, the **Word of God corrects** because, as Paul says, not only does it reprove, but it rebukes. Sometimes you have to do very plain preaching. Honestly, the best way to have courage is to stand behind the Word of God.

Often, I tell people, "Look, if you don't agree with this, don't take it up with me. Don't even come to see me about it. Talk to God about it. Now, if I'm not preaching the Word of God, come see me, but this is the Word of God. I'm stepping out of the argument. You take it up with God." This gives me courage.

Have you ever seen a preacher preach with fear in his eyes? God have mercy. Oh, when you can stand up and open the Word of God and say, "There it is. That is God's Word." You aren't the author. You aren't the editor. You are the newspaper boy trying to put the newspaper on the front porch.

You can stand behind the Word of God and people will not accuse you of preaching your own opinions. Now the Word of God convicts. It really does. It corrects, and it constructs. Indeed, Paul instructs us to, "Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."

In our churches, there are many who need to be exhorted with encouragement, edification, and instruction. Exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. There's no substitute for preaching. Always be ready to preach.

## **DO YOU LOVE TO PREACH?**

If someone were to drop a handkerchief and say, “preach,” you ought to be on the second point before it hits the ground. Just love to preach. Charles Spurgeon said, concerning getting ready to preach, “Kill yourself with work and then pray yourself alive again.”<sup>1</sup> Our commission is steadfast. Paul told Timothy, “Be instant in season and out of season.” That means you take opportunities and you make opportunities.

I have no confidence in the man who will not preach unless he's paid. None.

I've preached in all kinds of situations. As a young preacher, I stood on a bus bench and preached. While preaching there, I met a man that later became a key partner in my life. A very godly man. One of my dearest friends.

I have preached in bars and taverns. I've preached in rescue missions. I've preached in trailer parks. I've preached anywhere that God would give me an opportunity to preach. That means be instant in season and out of season.

I've preached for pay. I've preached for no pay. And I have paid to preach because this is my calling. Truly, I can testify that God has taken care of my family and me quite well.

So don't wait until things are just right to preach.

Early in my preaching ministry, I met a man in front of a hotel. In time, he bought me a brand-new car and gave it to me. I said to him, “Doyle, I’m thankful for this car. I receive it from Jesus through you. But before I receive it, I want to tell you two things. Number one, if you ever get into sin, I’m going to preach to you about it, and number two, if God calls me away, I’m taking the car with me.”

In ministry, you cannot get indebted to anybody. You have to be God’s man. You need to allow the Word of God to be in you like a fire in your bones.

## **THE STORY OF UNCLE CHARLIE**

It’s amazing how you can make opportunities to preach. Down in Fort Pierce, Florida, I used to have a man in my church. His name was Charlie Fisher. They called him Uncle Charlie.

He was a wiry little guy and a Wesleyan preacher. This man was so in love with Jesus, and one of the most eccentric men that I have ever met.

One of his favorite things to do was to fly his airplane over county fairs and outdoor community events. On the side of his little airplane, he had huge letters added that said, “Christ is the answer.” While flying over these events, he’d dump out baskets full of gospel tracts on the people below. When they would look up, they’d see the words on the side of his plane.

On another occasion, Uncle Charlie got an old movie projector and went down to a very bad section of our city. It was dangerous. It was called Avenue D. Uncle Charlie took his

projector, by himself, and went down to a bar in this rough part of town. He asked the owner if he could show a movie and started looking for a place to plug in the projector.

When he got the projector all set and ready, he stood to address the crowd in the bar. He said, “Everybody, listen to me. We’re going to have a movie. It’s a religious movie. There can’t be any smoking or drinking while it’s playing. Do you understand?”

Then, Uncle Charlie showed that movie, and God fell on that place. It was about the second coming of Christ. As the movie ended, he gave an invitation—in the bar. He said, “I want every head bowed. Now, if you believe what you have just seen, and you want to turn from your sin and give your heart to Jesus Christ, lift up your hand.” A number of them did.

Among those that made a decision for Christ was the owner of that bar. Uncle Charlie went to her and he said, “Lady, did you mean to lift your hand? She said, “Yes, I did.” A few days later, I went to see her myself and talk to her. Indeed, she had met Jesus because the man had holy boldness to preach the Word of God.

When Uncle Charlie died, he preached his own funeral. He literally did. Before he died, he gave very specific instructions to his son. He said, when I die, get all of my friends together. You don’t have to do a thing in the world except push the button on this tape recorder. I’ve already got the sermon done.

As the crowd gathered for Uncle Charlie’s funeral, Lee asked everyone to be seated to listen. Then, he pushed the play button on the tape recorder. Uncle Charlie’s voice spoke to the crowd and said, “I’m up in Heaven now, and it’s wonderful up here.” Then, he began to preach about Heaven.