

Preaching the Sermon on the Mount PRH790

Nazarene Theological Seminary
Spring 2009
January 19 – 29, 2009; 5:30 – 9:45 p.m.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed, broadly, to help the preacher develop skills for preaching in the 21st century. To accomplish that task, attention will be given to one particular portion of the biblical text – the Sermon on the Mount (SOM), and one particular homiletical method – the phenomenological method of David Buttrick.

COURSE RATIONALE

The SOM is one of the richest passages of scripture for preaching. Whether considered in its entirety or in its component parts (the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, etc.), for centuries it has captured the minds and imaginations of theologians and preachers in the Church. They have left us a rich treasure of writings on the SOM. Although homiletical methods have changed over the centuries, the modern reader will find that there is an amazing relevance to the sermons from previous generations. The SOM offers particularly rich preaching resources for pastors in the holiness tradition, but often those resources remain "unmined." This course will expose us to the rich treasures of this essential text.

One of the challenges in teaching and learning contemporary homiletical methods stems from the fact that there is such a variety of homiletical options. Courses that offer a glimpse at the breadth of available options often are limited in the depth of attention that is given to any method(s). The result is that *mastery* of a homiletical method is often elusive. In this course, attention will be given to a single homiletical method – David Buttrick's. Pairing Buttrick's *magnum opus*, *Homiletic* with his *Speaking Jesus* will give us the opportunity to go deeper into the study and practice of his homiletical method as we craft sermons from the Sermon on the Mount.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Be conversant in the discussion of the traditional ways the SOM has been interpreted.
2. Articulate their own interpretive approach to the SOM.
3. Be conversant in the conversation of "media cultures" and how they influence the hearing, reading, and preaching of the SOM.

4. Engage in the “double hermeneutic” of reading texts from the past and present situations in the process of crafting sermons.
5. Craft sermons using the homiletical method set forth in David Buttrick’s Homiletic.
6. Develop a “sermon rationale” for a sermon from the text of the SOM – one that exegetes a particular congregation and develops a homiletical strategy to proclaim the gospel to a particular people.

COURSE TEXTS

The Bible: If you do not work easily in the Hebrew and Greek texts a modern translation such as the NRSV, NASB, or NIV should be used. The instructor will use the NRSV and NIV as the basis of class discussion.

David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.

David Buttrick, *Speaking Jesus: Homiletic Theology and the Sermon on the Mount*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

Jeffrey P. Greenman, Timothy Larsen, and Stephen R. Spencer, eds. *The Sermon on the Mount Through the Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007.

Barbara Brown Taylor, *Speaking of Sin*. Boston: Cowley Publications, 2000.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading of the assigned texts, participation in class discussion, and completion of written assignments are all crucial for the student to be successful in this course. Below is a description of the specific expectations for the course.

1. Hearing the Sermon on the Mount.

Listen to the text of Matthew 5-7 at least once a week between December 8, 2008 and January 11, 2009. MP3 files can be downloaded from Blackboard. On **January 12, 2009**, submit a 2-4 page paper on Blackboard with brief notations from each hearing about what “caught your ear.”

2. Imaging the Sermon on the Mount.

Find a movie or video clip (5 minutes or less in duration) that illustrates or makes reference to the Sermon on the Mount. Be prepared to give a brief commentary on the way the clip “images” a portion of the SOM. Clips need to be prepared for viewing in class beginning **Tuesday, January 20th**.

3. Interpreting the Sermon on the Mount.

Interpreters of the SOM have always grappled with a series of overlapping questions, including the following:

1. To whom is the SOM addressed? To men and women in general, or to those committed to the way of Jesus?

2. Does Jesus simply interpret or clarify the Law of Moses? Or does he present radically new teachings?
3. Is the SOM (as Law) intended to make the readers or listeners aware of their need of grace? Or does the SOM *presuppose* God's forgiveness and acceptance of the sinner and therefore set out demands for true discipleship?
4. To what extent is the SOM to be interpreted literally? How do you determine which portions to be taken literally, and why?

Prior to the class convening, write a 4-5 page paper that outlines your own interpretive approach to the SOM, taking the questions above into consideration as you develop your position. **Due Friday, January 9, 2009.**

[Questions adapted from G.N. Stanton, "Sermon on the Mount/Plain," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, pp.735-744. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight, editors. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

4. Reading assignments

The following are the ways in which you will demonstrate your completion of the required readings for this course – 4 texts and one article.

David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures*.

Read this text in its entirety before class sessions begin. We will be engaging with this text regularly in class. You will report the percentage of this text that you have read on the first day of class, **Monday, January 19, 2009.**

David Buttrick, *Speaking Jesus: Homiletic Theology and the Sermon on the Mount*.

Read Part I of this text [pp.1-48] prior to class. You will report the percentage of this text that you have read on the first day of class, **Monday, January 19, 2009.** Read Part II to accompany classroom discussion of the Sermon on the Mount. Reading assignments are indicated on the **course outline**.

Jeffrey P. Greenman, Timothy Larsen, and Stephen R. Spencer, eds. *The Sermon on the Mount Through the Centuries*.

Read chapter 1 (Introduction) and **all** of the following chapters on four major theological figures: Ch. 3 (Augustine), ch. 6 (Martin Luther), ch. 7 (John Calvin), ch.8 (John Wesley). Then read **one** of the remaining seven chapters on the figure(s) of your choice.

You will present a brief **oral report** contrasting **one** of the four major theological figures (Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley) with the figure(s) you chose from one of the seven remaining chapters. What similarities and differences are there in their interpretive approaches? What do you find most compelling about their interpretation of the SOM? Reports will be given **January 21 and 22.**

Barbara Brown Taylor, *Speaking of Sin*

After reading Taylor's book, write a **4-5 page** reflection paper that considers the following question: How does Taylor's discussion of the ways we speak of sin influence the ways we speak of sin and righteousness, particularly as that

discussion arises from the Sermon on the Mount? **Due Friday, February 13, 2009.**

Tom Long, "Stolen Goods: Tempted to plagiarize."
<http://www.christiancentury.org/article.lasso?id=3195>

Post to Blackboard indicating that you have read this article. **Due Monday, December 15, 2008.**

5. Sermons & Sermon Rationale

You will be writing **two** sermon manuscripts for this class. The first will be submitted (hard copy) on the day you preach in class (**January 27, 28, or 29**). Each student will preach a 15-20 minute sermon from a passage from Matthew 5-7.

The second manuscript will also be on a passage from Matthew 5-7. It will be submitted on Blackboard and accompanied by a **sermon rationale** that explains your homiletical strategy for the sermon, with a given congregation in mind. An example of a sermon rationale will be available on Blackboard. **Due March 6, 2009.**

6. Writing exercises

Brief writing exercises will be assigned during the class sessions (introductions, moves, etc.). The evaluation of these assignments will be included in the "participation" grade.

7. Sermon evaluations

Each student will submit written evaluations of sermons preached in class by their peers. The evaluation of these assignments will be included in the "participation" grade.

DUE DATES

Below is a chronological listing of course requirements. Numbers in parentheses refer to corresponding number in Course Requirements above.

December 8	(1) Begin listening to the SOM (At least once a week for 5 weeks).
December 15	(4) Complete reading of Tom Long's article, "Stolen Goods"
January 9	(3) Submit paper on your interpretive approach to the SOM
January 12	(1) Submit paper with notations on listening to the SOM.
January 19	(4) Report percentage of <i>Homiletic</i> read.
January 19	(4) Report percentage of Part I of <i>Speaking Jesus</i> read.
January 20	(2) Present film or video clip that images the SOM.
January 21,22	(4) Oral presentation on 2 figures from Greenman's book
January 27,28,29	(5) Preach sermon in class. Sermon manuscript due.
January 27,28,29	(7) Sermon evaluations of peers
February 13	(4) Submit paper on Taylor's book
March 6	(5) Sermon manuscript and sermon rationale due

COURSE OUTLINE

Below is a day-by-day outline of our 9 class sessions, with reading assignments from Part II of *Speaking Jesus*.

January 19	Introduction to the course and to one another Media cultures The orality of the SOM The hermeneutical task
January 20	Matthew 5; <i>Speaking Jesus</i> chapters 4 & 5 Interpretive approaches to the SOM Naming and narration Speaking in moves <i>Film/video clips</i>
January 21	Matthew 5; <i>Speaking Jesus</i> chapters 6 & 7 Point of view Conjoining moves <i>Oral presentations, Greenman book</i>
January 22	Matthew 6; <i>Speaking Jesus</i> chapter 8 Introductions and conclusions <i>Oral presentations, Greenman book</i>
January 23	Matthew 6, 7; <i>Speaking Jesus</i> chapters 9 & 10 Images and the image grid The language of preaching
January 26	Matthew 7; <i>Speaking Jesus</i> chapter 11 Modes of preaching
January 27	Student sermons
January 28	Student sermons
January 29	Student sermons The power of the Word

COURSE EVALUATION

The instructor will assign numerical grades (between 0 and 100) to the work required. The final grade will be calculated using the following percentage weighting:

SERMONS & RATIONALE	40%
15% for each manuscript, 10% for rationale	

READING	25%
Taylor paper; Greenman, et al oral report; report on pages read in Buttrick; report on reading Long article.	
PARTICIPATION	25%
Listening assignment, imaging the text, attendance, discussion, sermon Evaluations	
PRE-CLASS PAPER ON INTERPRETING THE SOM	10%

It is the commitment of NTS and of this instructor to make every reasonable effort to facilitate the learning of students capable of graduate level seminary work. Any student who has a condition that may prevent full demonstration of his or her abilities (e.g., difficulty seeing or hearing, dyslexia, or other learning disabilities) should contact the instructor immediately, or as soon as possible, to discuss learning needs, alternatives which have worked for the student in the past, and mutually acceptable accommodations to ensure the student's full participation and appropriate evaluation in the course.

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Jim Fitzgerald began his preparation for ministry at Asbury College, later transferring to Olivet Nazarene University where he completed a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Literature in 1985. He completed his Master's of Divinity at Nazarene Theological Seminary in 1989, with a concentration in Church History. In 1999 he completed his Ph.D. in Homiletics and American Church History from Vanderbilt University. His dissertation was entitled, "*Weaving a Rope of Sand: The Separation of the Proclamation of the Word and the Celebration of the Eucharist in the Church of the Nazarene.*"

He served in pastoral ministry during his years at NTS (Oregon, MO), and Vanderbilt (Fairview, TN). Following the completion of his degree at Vanderbilt, he served as an associate pastor in Bethany, OK. Since 2001 he has pastored at Trinity Church of the Nazarene in Duncanville, TX.

Jim has been an adjunct professor at Trevecca Nazarene University, Southern Nazarene University, and Northwest Nazarene University (online). In addition to homiletics, his academic interests include Pastoral Theology, Multi-cultural Worship, the Sacraments, American Church History, and Wesley studies.

Jim and his wife Liz have been married for 23 years and have 3 daughters: Erin (20), Katie (16), and Anna (8).

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¹ With acknowledgement of Dr. Roger Hahn's bibliographic work on Matthew commentaries.