

# On Flower Preaching

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I didn't intend to create my own homiletic theory, but 10 years ago I invent one preaching theory of arrangement. However it is more than arrangement theory. It influences invention and delivery and memory. What a wonderful and amazing it is! I shared with pastors and students in the seminary. They all loved it so much and said to me that it really helped them a lot. They said it made them easy to prepare and deliver sermon. Before, they were anxious how to prepare sermon, how to make message, and how to deliver well, but they said this "Flower Preaching" method really helps them a lot. Also they said this method reduces energy and time when they prepare sermon. And also Flower Preaching helps them more flexible when they are on the pulpit. They can be more attentive to Holy Spirit. I taught this theory in the seminary in Korea and Mexicali seminary too and all students showed how they are excited about this Flower Preaching method.

Today in the first class in the Chiapas in the master's program in theology here, I am so happy to share my homiletic theory. I also founded my own Homiletic Institute in the internet. You may go to [www.homiletic.org](http://www.homiletic.org) to visit. I made by four languages: Korean, English, German, and Spanish. God gave me vision to go to all over the world to help and teach preachers in order for them to preach the gospel and the truth well. I devoted my life for this goal. I am so happy to be here to help you pastors and preachers. It is so much honor to me and thank you so much for coming here to learn with me. I say, learn with me! Nobody can teach only; we learn from each other mutually. You learn from me and with me, but I learn from you and with you. I hope my class here in Ocosingo is democratic and both way and more participating than one way, dictatorial and pushy.

Okay my friends, then, what is Flower Preaching? Let us think about flower! Flower has petals, sometimes 6 or 8 or 10 or more. But in my theory of preaching I say 8 petals of flower. I ask you to take one letter-size blank paper with you and then draw small rectangle in the middle so that you can write your sermon title, biblical text, and

main theme of your sermon. And then divide it with 8 sections like 8 petals of flower that circles centered on the square in the middle. It is like game for fun. To preach you can fill this blank: total 8 sections as well as square in the middle. It is like you make sermon outline only in this one page Flower structure. Many cases, preachers are used to make their sermon vertical outline like they are writing argument paper by numbering. I. II. III. And then, I a, b, c II a, b, c III a, b, c. You can still use this vertical method in your sermon. No problem! However the reason Flower Preaching is popular for preachers is Flower Preaching is not vertical but circular. When you have two and more pages of sermon outline with vertical method you don't know what it will come later, but when you use this circular Flower method you can see whole sermon in one sight.

All right then, now you have one paper with this Flower design. Now you are ready for next step. We preach only 30 minutes or more or less. If you should preach longer you can make front and back as Flower structure in case. But most cases I encourage you to try to limit and hold every outline in one page flower structure. Now you have 8 petals. Traditionally in preaching we use introduction and conclusion although K. Barth and Bonhoeffer and some others new Homiletic teachers advise us that we don't need introduction and conclusion. I will discuss this issue in the later my class, but for the time being I like to follow traditional teaching. So you can use one petal for introduction and another petal for conclusion and you can use 6 petals for sermon body.

Normally in our sermon, as philosopher Aristotle suggested, number three is best number to remember and to be remembered in our communication. We can have more points than three or less but in one sermon having three points would be enough. Then we can use 2 petals for each point for three points. Now you get idea how this 8 petalswork in our sermon structure when we have three points sermon body. Do you get it, my friends?

There are many ways we can develop our sermon structure. Traditionally argumentative homiletic has points in its sermon body to argue its main idea, and now in the new homiletic world many homiletic teachers changes points to move. Let's say from logical points to dialectical move like thesie-antithesis-synthesis. This may sound little difficult.

Okay, you don't need to worry about this. Later I will explain more easily. But

now just remember whether traditionally or in the new homiletic method, and whether we have points or moves, most time we have three changes. Do you get it? In a way it is the same; only it is different whether it is points or moves. But for me it sounds not much big difference. Preachers can use sometimes points and other times moves, and mixed!

Why not? Holy Spirit is freely working with preachers. We, preachers, are free following Holy Spirit and his wind blow. We have to open all possibilities when we preach and prepare for it. What never changes is the truth and the bible! Method can be changed. There is nor good method nor bad method. What makes method bad is the content. Sometimes I see some homiletic teachers and professors argue and fight who is right, whose method is better and best and right, but it sounds to me foolish. As Augustine said all method is neutral. Every method of communication can be used for communication of truth and bible. I believe so! So my Flower preaching method embraces both old homiletic method (points) and new homiletic method (moves). I am proud of that.

Now we face one question: where and how do we get messages to fill in these 8 petals? To answer this question we have to think about invention or creation theory of sermon. We, preachers, have Bible and Holy Spirit and other materials. We can get our message from those. But how? I am homiletic professor not biblical theology professor. So I make things easy for preachers. What I am going to teach is to presuppose that you know and learned exegetical method from biblical teachers. What I am going to teach you is beyond that teachings or including that teachings or in the more practical way. In the rhetorical canons first canon is invention, let's say, how to invent or create what to speak(invention). And then how to arrange the message(arrangement), and then how to express (style) and how to deliver(delivery) and memorize(memory). This is most important five canons of Rhetorical study. We don't need to discuss now about rhetoric, but why I am mentioning this is to let you know where we are rhetorically speaking. We are at the number 2 arrangement. So we need to go back to arrive at this number 2 arrangement.

When I started this lecture I just jumped to this second step of arrangement. All right then, do you have question if my Flower Preaching method also has different method for invention? I expect that question. My answer is YES. We will study about the sermon preparation process later but now I want to tell some about it. Jesus said,

“When they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”(Matthew 10:19-20). I truly believe this. Not only me, St. Augustine also said from this biblical verse and asked, “If God and Holy Spirit would give you what to preach and how to preach in front of nonbelievers and persecutors, then why doesn’t God and Holy Spirit give what to preach and how to preach to the His sheep in the church.” I love what St. Augustine said! Do you agree?

Do you agree and believe God will give preachers what to preach and how to preach for his sheep? Okay then, How? How can God give preachers what to preach and how to preach? We have three major sources for preaching. First, living God/Holy Spirit continues to speak to us, through us, and by us. Second, Holy Bible continues to be truth and power to salvation and guidance, and third preacher him/herself. Many preachers wander away finding message from the world, books, and other materials, but you preachers already have everything you need to preach. Holy Spirit knows the deep secret of congregation about what happened to them, what’s wrong with them, and how they are. Holy Spirit gives preachers knowing his or her congregation’s need. But Holy Spirit speaks to us through Holy Bible. And preachers are living library. Believe me! Some preacher thinks they can’t preach well until they read many books. It is true but not perfect. Books are written by people. Books are not only papers. What books tell is what people experience in the daily life. So, if you have your own pastoral daily life and experience, we can say we are living library. So many books are in our brain. In our memory there are huge tons of knowledge and information and illustration we can use.

I am sorry that I feel we lost our track about Flower Preaching, but it is not. All these discussion of how to get what to preach and how to preach have to do with Flower Preaching. Flower preaching is flexible in many ways. So, I strongly encourage you to pray above all before you start anything for preaching. When you have to preach next Sunday, you should or better start as early as possible so you should kneel down before God. At least 30 minutes to 1 hour. Pray! Ask! Beg! Cry! Thinking of your congregation and audience who will listen to your preaching, and ask God, God I need you, please speak to me what to preach and how to preach. Give me word for my congregation! When you pray like this, have one or two sheet of papers, and write down whatever comes up to your mind, scribble, and jot down. First of all, ask God what text you have to preach from. Keep asking, and keep knocking the door of heaven for revelation. God

is still speaking to us. God is alive. God speaks to us now whenever we ask! Why not? Be confident! Have faith! In my experience when I ask text, God gives me some hint of the text like one phrase, or sentence, or topic, and then I go to that text that came up to my mind, and then opened the bible and set text around 10 verses, more or less, and read several times praying at the same time asking God to open our eyes to see His truth for my congregation.

Whatever comes up to your mind from God, write down into one or two pages papers. You don't need to make outline. This is just notes. Praying to ask what to preach also ask how to preach, like good example and metaphor. If something like that comes up write down. Not only message but also metaphor (illustration)! When you pray, ask God and Holy Spirit using questions like why, what, who, when, how etc. You are pastor which means priest like in the Old Testament. You hold God's hand in one side and another side you hold hands of your people, your congregation. You know well about your congregation as pastor, you know their suffering, their problem, their pain, their success, their prayers. You know what they need from God. As preacher like priest, you should stand and kneel down before God like Moses and like Samuel. Listen Samuel prayed like this: "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you."(I Samuel 12:23) Like Samuel you should pray for your congregation to God and you should pray to God to give you message for them.

Message is spiritual food, or spiritual medicine. Truthful message has power, power to heal, power to save, and power to change action. I pray that you are to be powerful preacher. Keep praying and asking God to give you message and talk to God, talk to the text you got using questions, and write down. Now you have messages from God. Maybe one or two pages! And finally now you are ready to do Flower Preaching. Draw flower structure now! 8 petals with one square in the middle! Start from left low section for introduction. But you should leave open introduction until the end. Normally preachers make their introduction in the end because we make sermon body first and then we can decide what kind of sermon head or introduction we make. Or, like Barth and Bonhoeffer we may not make introduction.

Start writing your biblical verses from which you got some explanation or application, and with illustration if you have. Remember almost all sermon is composed in the small section with explanation (or interpretation) of text from the perspective of

preacher and application for the lives of congregation. So, simply put, explanation and application!

Now you finished your Flower Preaching. Then it is time to write your sermon manuscript. How many of you write your sermon manuscript? I know and I understand that you can't write all sermons. But at least you should or may write Sunday sermon. I encourage you to do this. Then you can get your sermon manuscripts for 52 Sundays. Barth and Bonhoeffer all encourage preachers to write manuscript. Now that you have Flower Preaching it is much easier to write sermon. Put your flower preaching paper on the table and start write. You will realize while you write sermon you can get more illustrations and ideas and you will see your writing sermon is going to be more mature. But when you can't write sermon, it is all right you can bring this flower preaching on the pulpit and you can preach. Then you will find out that you are much more flexible on the pulpit. Sometimes you can change, add, omit, and jump dancing with the Holy Spirit. Martin Luther also had many sermon outlines like flower preaching but also he had written many manuscripts. As busy pastor we can't write all sermons but pastor should have time to pray, meditate and read and write at least for Sunday. Like you, many Korean pastors are busy and they have to preach a lot. There are every early morning sermons, Wednesday evening, Friday morning for Women and evening, and many home visiting sermons. They preach a lot. My friend pastors said when they used this Flower Preaching, it was much easier. So now you know how you can use this Flower Preaching both for writing manuscript and for pulpit. Without outline you can't write manuscript.

I suggest also you should start to pray and decide sermon text and flower structure until Monday or at last Tuesday, and write sermon manuscript until Monday and Tuesday for the Sunday. What congregation really cares for you preachers is Sunday sermon. Sunday sermon is symbolic. They don't evaluate every sermon but they really want to hear something better on Sunday. Do you understand? So invest energy and time for Sunday sermon! At least one sermon a week you should really work hard. But still for other occasion to preach you can use Flower Preaching structure, only without manuscript. When you finished your manuscript through prayer and flower structure until Monday or Tuesday, I encourage you to read the sermon once or twice a day until Saturday. Live with the sermon until Sunday. Now it is time that you can go to books if you like, you can add, edit, and cut out. You can find some good illustration related to your sermon because your mind is with the sermon topic and you can add. If

you don't like some parts you can cut boldly. You can practice delivery, pronunciation, gesture, tone etc. You still pray everyday for the sermon on the Sunday. Doing this early you are more enjoy your sermon. On Saturday you can go to church and pray for about 30 minutes or 1 hour asking Holy Spirit to anoint your sermon, your church, and your congregation. I strongly encourage you to pray about 1 hour before you preach to the Holy Spirit earnestly crying and screaming, like Jesus when he prayed he was like bleeding. After you finish flower structure and writing sermon, you can still study more, watch TV more, talk to people more and you can interact with your sermon. So you live with the sermon whole week. In the meantime you can make other sermons using flower structure not writing manuscript. So your preaching ministry is now relaxing.

Some preachers quit because they feel so overburden because of sermon. When you make sermon on Saturday for Sunday you will get a lot of stress. It almost kills you and your health because of stress. You should start early with flower preaching and you will love and enjoy to preach! So this is all about Flower Preaching!