

# Topical, Textual, Expository Preaching

Dr. Ricardo Park

When we talk about traditional preaching, there are basically these three preaching methods: topical, textual, and expository sermon. What and how can we do these three methods of preaching? Simply put, these three methods are called according to how much they use biblical text and outside materials. Topical preaching uses maybe one verse from the biblical text but it uses three points from outside materials. Textual preaching uses three points from biblical text but uses outside materials for sub-points. Expository preaching uses three main points and sub-points from biblical text. As you see here, these three different kinds of traditional preaching are called according to how much they use biblical text as their sermon text.

However, we should be careful here because it may sound topical preaching is not that much good compared to expository preaching because it doesn't use as much biblical text as expository. Like I said earlier, according to St. Augustine, there is nor bad method nor good method. All methods are neutral! Ironically, some preachers who seem to use expository method may appear to be not biblical in the spirit of whole Bible, but preachers who use topical method can be so much biblical when they really obey and listen to whole Bible. We can't say some preachers are better and more biblical because they just use a lot of bible quotation. They may try to support their own human thoughts by using a lot of bible quotation.

Actually this expository preaching is another way of new preaching against topical preaching which has three points with introduction and conclusion. When preachers abused their method just to support their thought away from Bible, new preaching method which tried to go back to the Bible renewed traditional three points argumentative preaching. This expository preaching is another new homiletic inside conservative and evangelical churches in general, while now we have new homiletic inside liberal main denominations since 1970.

I encourage you to be able to preach with these three preaching methods. In the topical preaching, you can have sermon text but you can focus on one verse or one word to preach. You can meditate that verse or word deeply and then you may make points outside the sermon text like other biblical text or your own making creatively. Even all

sub-points can come outside of sermon text. However it is free to do everything. Textual preaching uses (three) points from exact sermon text, but preachers are free to make sub-points outside sermon text creatively. Expository preaching uses main points and sub-points from sermon text so it may look like bible study or biblical lectures, but at the same time preachers can support sub-points with illustrations and meditation and application. It all depends on how Holy Spirit and Bible lead you to what to preach and how to preach!

Now we are going to read one chapter from one of the most famous traditional homiletic professor in the modern history, Juan A. Broadus (*Tratado sobre la Predicacion*, pp. 187-201. “Diferentes Especies de Sermon- I. Sermones de Asunto II. Sermones de Texto. III. Sermones Expositivos”, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 1870). This chapter really talks about topical, textual and expository sermon. This book is classic in the modern preaching history almost like Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana* in the antiquity. This book influenced so many preachers for a long time, more than 100 years all over the world until New Homiletic movement had started at 1970 by professor Craddock in Emory University with his Inductive preaching. However, still Broadus’ three methods are helpful and necessary for preachers, as well as new approaches to the preaching. For me I encourage preachers to learn all these methods following Augustines’ teaching that there is nor good nor bad method, although New Homiletic resists totally Old Homiletic and vice versa.