

What is Narrative Preaching?

Dr. Ricardo Park

With inductive/problem-solving preaching, Narrative Preaching is another new homiletic we have to pay attention to it. What is Narrative Preaching then? Narrative means storytelling. Unlike argumentative traditional points sermons, Narrative preaching uses story (or stories) in their movements. Narrative Preaching can have one story or multiple stories for their movements. For me I enjoy from time to time to preach first person storyteller narrative preaching. In it, for example, I become Jacob in the Bible and tell like Jacob. What was my (Jacob) problem? Why did I (Jacob) do something? It is like autobiographical preaching. Try it. You will have fun. Also you can identify to all characters of the sermon text and you can preach as narrative. For this kind of preaching you have to pay close attention to the bible text and their psychology with deep prayer and meditation of the bible. You have to use your imagination of what they might have had in their thoughts when they acted like that. You have to pay close attention all dynamics between characters in the sermon text. Sometimes you can do Narrative Preaching as third person storyteller like Christmas cantata or drama in the church! You can be creative but you use story and movements instead of argumentative points to prove something. You inspire imagination of audience.

Also you can do Narrative Preaching with multiple stories. You can use different stories in continuation in sermon. It may look like topical sermon that has stories as illustration. Sometimes I am confused to see the difference of two! It is almost similar. They have main theme and illustrations of stories to prove. But what is really different is Narrative Preaching doesn't use points like first, second and third. It just flows with stories and let audience to participate to make their own applications. This is big difference. Narrative Preaching and Narrative preachers leave open for the conclusion and application for audience while topical preachers make his/her points and application and conclusion for audience although they both uses stories.

Narrative Preaching has plots like novel or drama or movie. Development is a start like thesis. Explanation of problems! And then crisis comes. Problems become worse conflicts and crises like antithesis. And then audience needs to find solution like synthesis. All these problems find solution from the Bible or truth. But not like argumentative academic papers, novel uses story plots and moves. It doesn't prove by

points but develop by plots and movements. This is big difference. Preachers in the traditionally was only teachers or professors or lawyers who tries to teach, prove and persuade by arguments, but in this Narrative Preaching of New Homiletic, preachers become storytellers. Why not? Jesus was storyteller in the New Testament. Jesus didn't use academic method in his preaching. He just told parables and left audience to decide what to do, like Narrative Preaching or Inductive Preaching in the New Homiletic. I strongly advise preachers to learn this new concept of preaching. Why not?

There are many complicated explanations of Narrative Preaching and a lot of books about Narrative. But to my understanding, what is most important for Narrative Preaching is create crisis or conflict to find resolution, by starting problem or needs. This is totally dialectic structure like other New Homiletic methods. I already explained how New and Old Homiletics are different: Logic vs. Dialectic!

Now I like to practice this Narrative Preaching with you. It is really fun with a lot of imagination. You will see surprising stories while doing this preaching. You will see how deeper level you are going to preach in the human psychology, which you can't preach with argumentative preaching. What a blessing! Enjoy!