

Preaching Primer

These quotes from John Piper's [*Expository Exultation: Christian Preaching as Worship*](#) highlight the exultation aspect of Expository Exultation.

"[Lloyd-Jones] knew that the great aim of preaching is the white-hot worship of God's people." (14)

"J. I. Packer meant when he said that Lloyd-Jones's preaching came to him with the force of electric shock and brought him "more of a sense of God than any other man." (14)

"One of the primary burdens of this book is to show that preaching not only assists worship, but also is worship. The title *Expository Exultation* is intended to communicate that this unique form of communication is both a rigorous intellectual clarification of the reality revealed through the words of Scripture and a worshipful embodiment of the value of that reality in the preacher's exultation over the word he is clarifying." (16)

"Therefore, to say that preaching is worship and serves worship raises two questions. One relates to how the preacher is taken up into the supernatural. The other relates to how the preacher uses all his natural powers in the service of the miracle of worship." (18)

"How does [the preacher] become an instrument of God so that his preaching becomes an act of worship and a means of awakening worship?" (18)

"The present volume, *Expository Exultation*, aims to show how preaching becomes and begets the blood-bought, Spirit-wrought worship of the worth and beauty of God." (22)

"I am hoping to show that preaching is worship and serves worship." (25)

"But if you believe, as I do, that seeing the spiritual beauty of biblical truth without savoring it is sin..." (25)

"Savoring the glory of God is the essence of true worship." (26)

"The essence of worship is the heart's experience of affections that magnify the beauty and worth of God." (26)

"I take "in spirit" to mean that this true worship is carried along by the Holy Spirit and is happening mainly as an inward, spiritual event, not mainly as an outward, bodily event (cf. John 3:6). And I take "in truth" to mean that this true worship is a response to true views of God and is shaped and guided by true views of God." (27)

"This is worship: to act in a way that shows the heart's valuing of the glory of God and the name of the Lord Jesus. Or, as we said in the introduction, worship means consciously knowing and treasuring and showing the supreme worth and beauty of God." (27)

"Worship—whether an inner act of the heart, or an outward act of daily obedience, or an act of the congregation collectively—is a magnifying of God. That is, it is an act that consciously shows how magnificent God is." (28)

"The essence of praising Christ is prizing Christ." (30)

"Preaching itself is worship and is appointed by God to awaken and intensify worship." (51)

"To say it another way, the preacher simultaneously explains the meaning of Scripture and exults over the God-glorifying reality in it." (51)

"Exultation without explanation is not preaching. Explanation without exultation is not preaching. Therefore, preaching—expository exultation— is peculiarly suited for Christian corporate worship, for worship means knowing, treasuring, and showing the supreme worth and beauty of God. Preaching helps people do this by doing it. Preaching shows God's supreme worth by making the meaning of Scripture known and by simultaneously treasuring and expressing the glories of God revealed in that biblical meaning." (51)

"But together—exposition, as making clear what the Scripture really means, and exultation, as openly treasuring the divine glories of that meaning—they combine to make preaching what it is." (53)

"A herald (kēryx) who communicated by his demeanor that he did not revere his king, or regard his message as valuable, was nearing treason. To speak as a herald was to communicate not only the truth but also the value of the message and the majesty of the authority behind it." (61)

"The message of the preacher, the herald, is not merely a body of facts to be understood. It is a constellation of glories to be treasured. It is, at times, a tempest of horrors to be fled. Any thought that the message of a preacher could be delivered as a detached explanation fails to grasp the significance of Paul's use of the phrase "Herald the word!" Or, "Preach good news!" Or, "Proclaim Christ." Preaching is both accurate teaching and heartfelt heralding. It is expository exultation." (66)

"He is "a burning and shining lamp" (John 5:35). Burning with exultation. Shining with exposition." (78)

"Here's the point for preaching: Paul made clear that preaching aims at awakening and sustaining and strengthening faith. The essence of faith is seeing and savoring and being satisfied in all that God is for us in Jesus. When we preachers experience this in preaching, and our people experience it through preaching, we and they magnify the preciousness and worth of God." (81)

"That is what preaching aims to awaken and sustain. The aim of preaching—whatever the topic, whatever the text—is this kind of faith. It aims to quicken in the soul a satisfaction with all that God is for us in Jesus, because this satisfaction magnifies God's all-sufficient glory, and that is worship." (81)

"I am thinking here of preaching as the portrayal of Christ with words so vivid that Paul speaks of their effect as seeing the very glory of Christ—a seeing so powerful that it transforms the one who sees." (82)

"Preaching aims to present Christ in such a way that a spiritual "seeing" happens—a seeing so powerful that the hearers-seers are "transformed into the same image." (83)

"The point I am trying to make here is that preaching is supremely suited for corporate worship, because it is uniquely suited by God for unveiling the glory of Christ with a view to transforming people into that glory." (85)

"Which means that, as he preaches this treasure, he is treasuring. As he holds up the pearl, he is prizing. As he invites to the banquet, he is savoring the feast. If he were not, he would be a hypocritical "natural person" and unfit for the ministry." (86)

"The preacher must aim at worship and act worship. He must exhibit and experience the worth of Christ. He must explain and extol. He must take up the happy burden of expository exultation." (86)

"God glorifies Himself toward the creatures also in two ways: 1. By appearing to . . . their understanding. 2. In communicating Himself to their hearts, and in their rejoicing and delighting in and enjoying the manifestations which He makes of Himself." (94)

"In other words, God gets glory from his creatures in worship by our knowing him truly, and by our enjoying him duly. Where knowledge of God is defective, his glory will be diminished in our defective knowing. Where delight in God is restrained or hindered or discouraged, his glory will be diminished in our diminished enjoyment. Essential to glorifying God is seeing him clearly and savoring him dearly. (94)

"When Christians gather for worship, the aim of those who lead must be to put before the mind of the worshipers the truest, clearest views of God possible, so as to waken in the heart of the worshipers the purest and most suitable affections toward God." (94)

I say "suitable affections" to refer to all the emotions we are capable of that correspond appropriately to whatever truth about God is presented to the mind...Wherever emotions are strong without some truth to warrant them, we call this "emotionalism" and put no value on it. And wherever beautiful and valuable truth about God is clear and there is little response of the heart, God is dishonored. (95)

"I don't think ministers are to be blamed for raising the affections of their hearers too high, if that which they are affected with be only that which is worthy of affection, and their affections are not raised beyond a proportion to their importance, or worthiness of affection. I should think myself in the way of my duty to raise the affections of my hearers as high as possibly I can, provided that they are affected with are not disagreeable to the nature of what they are affected with." (J Edwards, 95).

So the truth of hell, depending on the particular angle of the message, should raise the emotion of fear or sorrow or pity or anger, but not happiness, and certainly not playfulness. And the call to eternal glory (1 Pet. 5:10) should raise the emotions of hope and joy and eagerness and love, but not boredom, and certainly not repulsion. God-glorifying emotion must be a response to true and clear views of reality as it relates to God, and the nature of the God-glorifying emotion must be agreeable to the nature of the reality that awakens the emotions (95).

"The gathering of God's people for corporate worship, therefore, by its very nature, calls for a special kind of communication that aims to make the truth of God clear and the worth of God dear." (96)

"Corporate worship is not a gathering only for overflow. The full may overflow. That is worship. The languishing come to drink at the fountain of God's life-giving word. That too is worship. It magnifies the necessity and desirableness of God. The soul-hungry come to eat at the banquet that is spread from the rich stores of Scripture. This also is worship." (100)

"In view of this normal neediness of real Christians, God has designed us to depend on other humans to awaken and sustain and strengthen our worship—our knowing and treasuring God. This is clear from many considerations in the New Testament." (100)

Expository exultation corresponds to the nature of corporate worship. Its content and its demeanor are suited, by God's design, to restore and enlarge our knowledge of God (expository) and to restore and enlarge our passion for God (exultation). It does so not by standing outside the experience of worship like a coach on the sidelines of the game, or like a director backstage during the play, but by being part of the experience of worship itself. Preaching assists worship as worship. (102)

“In other words, without the sovereign, life-giving, blindness-removing, heart-illuminating, glory-revealing work of God’s Spirit, preaching, as expository exultation, cannot achieve its aims—indeed it cannot exist.” (105)

“Preaching is worship seeking worship.” (105)

“Grant joy in the truth I speak, and give me the affections that correspond to the gravity or gladness of what the text says. Grant me to feel love for your people, and compassion for the lost and the weak. Make me real.” (112)

“Aesthetically pleasing language may bring an adversarial mind into greater sympathy with the speaker. If the language is interesting and fresh enough, obstacles may be overcome—boredom, anger, resentment, suspicion—and replaced with respect and attraction and interest and concentration. These are not conversion, or conviction or sanctification, but they don’t drive a person away like boredom does.” (150)

“Exposition includes both rigorous attention to the very words of the biblical text and a radical penetration into the reality the text aims to communicate. The text provides the path for discovering the reality, so we are not free to dream up our own reality and then highjack the text to give it authority. If we can’t show the reality through the words of the text, we have no biblical authority for the reality.” (162)

“When I call for a radical penetration into the reality that the text aims to communicate, I mean vastly more than understanding ideas. I mean perceiving the reality that gave rise to the ideas. And I mean the emotions awakened by the reality that the author wants us not only to understand but also to experience.” (164)

“Pray for the pedagogical gift to intuit whether what is so plain to you is or isn’t plain to your people. They need wise, patient help to see and be amazed at what amazed you. And it is amazing. Show it to them. Show it to them. This is exposition. And you can do it with exultation over this magnificent reality of God’s care and our love. It will not be boring! God’s people love to see these things.” (171)

“The words of God are the best means of displaying the glory of God.” (186)

“No biblical text is distorted if we say that part of the author’s intention is to help us enjoy and display the glory of God. If that is true—if the ultimate goal of all Scripture (and every text) is that God be glorified—this will have a significant effect on how a preacher chooses what to say about his text. My assumption is that the more ultimate a goal is, the more important it is for our people to see and savor and seek. Therefore, if the glorification of God is the ultimate goal, preaching will seek to be as effective as it can be in clarifying the people’s understanding of the glory of God and enflaming their hearts to love it.” (202)

“For Paul, the ultimate goal in all that God does and all that God says (every text of Scripture understood according to the author’s Scripture-shaping vision of reality) is that God’s glory be seen and savored and shown as the greatest beauty and treasure of the universe.” (205)

“Therefore, in describing the ultimate goal of the biblical authors in what they write, it is not enough to say, “The goal is the glory of God,” or even to say, “The goal is to glorify God.” We must show how this happens. We must join the Bible in saying that the goal is to glorify him by seeing and savoring and showing him as the greatest beauty and treasure in the universe.” (207)

“The word *seeing* implies a right perception or knowing of the glory that God reveals. The word *savoring* implies all the positive affections of the Spirit-filled heart in response to the beauty and worth of God (praise, admiration, delight, love, satisfaction, joy, wonder, desire, awe, and more. The word showing implies the profound, visible life transformation that this seeing and savoring produce for God and men and angels to see, now and forever.” (207)

“If this is true, no preaching can be content to inform the mind about the glory of God. Preaching that is faithful to the ultimate goal of Scripture must also seek, by the power of the Spirit, to waken and sustain the heart’s deep and unshakable satisfaction in the glory of God. This is not minor or marginal. It is not icing on the cake of Christianity or preaching. It is the heart and essence of what glorifies God. (208)

“Therefore, I conclude that the ultimate goal of all biblical truth, and therefore every text, is that God be glorified by our seeing and savoring and showing him as the greatest beauty and treasure in the universe.” (208)

“Therefore, preaching will seek to be as effective as it can be in clarifying the people’s sight of the glory of God, and in enflaming their hearts to love it, so that the people of God will be profoundly and pervasively and practically transformed to show the supreme beauty and worth of God.” (208)

“The presence of the reality of the glory of God in our preaching is one of the main reasons that our preaching will be expository exultation. We will do as much harm as good if we weave the glory of God into our messages without any manifest wonder or joy.” (212)

“Presenting the glory of God in a way that communicates its minimal value to the preacher is slander against God. It communicates a lie—that God is not supremely beautiful and valuable.” (212)

“To be sure, as we argued in parts 4 and 5, rational exposition of every text is essential. But just as essential is a pervasive spirit of authentic and serious joy, suffusing the service, the sermon, and the preacher inside and outside the pulpit.” (212)

“Knowing that every newly discovered nuance of meaning and reality would provide another glimpse of God’s glory has been a motivation to spare no effort of analysis in study, or effort in exposition.” (213)

“The glory of God makes all concreteness, all specificity, all ordinariness radiant with the greatness of God.” (213)

“If every text aims at the glorification of God, every text is an invitation to find fullest satisfaction in him in relation to what this text is about.” (214)

“All the Scriptures are written to advance this experience of God. Every revelation of his character and ways, every description of Christ, every word he spoke, every rebuke of our sin, every promise of his grace, every practical command to walk in love and holiness, every warning against unrighteousness—all of these are blood-bought means of walking in joyful fellowship with God. This is what Jesus died for.” (235)

“Proclaiming Christ means making gloriously clear and beautiful all the implications of the blood-bought reality of Christ in you now.” (237)

“Since Jesus himself is also the capstone of every blood-bought blessing, the experience of God’s people, pursued in every sermon, is incomplete without the enjoyment of the living Christ. Every sermon, therefore, seeks to glorify Christ in the joyful, Christ-exalting, text-shaped obedience of his people.” (239)

“The implication this has for preaching is that the preacher constantly seeks to portray, from every text, that God in Christ is supremely and everlastingly satisfying. This is the goal of his exposition. It is the ground of his exultation. (251)

“Since the preacher knows that such love is necessary for final salvation (1 John 3:14), he will be vigilant in all his preaching to portray God in Christ as supremely satisfying to the souls of his people.” (253)

“The aim of this chapter is to give specific illustrations, from history and from the Scripture, of how finding delight in God is essential to our becoming holy, and why preaching should aim at that delight.” (253)

“So preaching that aims to produce true gospel contrition must continually aim to make God and his holiness look alluringly attractive so that, by the work of the Spirit, people will come to delight in it so much that they feel intense remorse over falling short of it.” (257)

“The preacher will drink from this well—from the river of God’s delights—until his exposition of God’s word overflows with exultation in the all-satisfying glories of God.” (258)

"If a word is in the mouth of God, it cannot be commonplace. It cannot be boring. It cannot be insignificant. It cannot be monotonous or tiresome or dull. The very fact that it comes from the mouth of the Creator of the universe makes it astonishing. The souls of our people do not live by bread alone. They live by this astonishing, soul-awakening, soul-satisfying word of God. To touch the fire of this word with exposition is to be enflamed with exultation." (258)

"This is the reality we preach. We aim to show that the grace and glory of God are so satisfying to the heart that our joy overflows to meet the needs of others. Therefore, we preach and pray that God will be seen in every text as all-satisfying." (259)

"This is our calling—by rigorous attention to the words of the text to penetrate though the text to the reality of the all-satisfying God." (261)

"Our people's satisfaction in God—treasuring God over all things—is either being nurtured by our preaching or neglected." (264)

"Thus the preaching that weaves the all-satisfying glories of God into every sermon honors and applies the indispensable doctrine of justification by faith." (264)

"Expository exultation is a unique kind of communication. It is something not brought from the world into the service of the church. Nor can the world take it from the church and use it for its own purposes. It is different, radically different, from anything in the world." (304)

"There is the explaining, the clarifying, the showing, the amazement, the rejoicing, the exultation, the offering, the pleading, the looking in the eyes. And all the while, there is the utter self-engagement, and, please God, the utter self-forgetting in the brightness of the truth." (304)

"This authentic, miracle hour of meeting God in worship—is unfathomable in its depth and extent. Because of this encounter with God, and this Spirit-anointed expository exultation, a thousand problems that had not yet come into being are solved in people's lives." (304)

"We gather to see and savor God. He is the end. And where we try to make him a means, worship begins to die." (304)

"But the preacher also knows this: if he fails in his expository exultation, if corporate worship languishes in lifelessness because the word of God does not come with clarity and faithfulness and soul-satisfying power, all the ministries suffer. Preaching is not everything, but it affects everything. It is the trumpet of truth in the church. And it echoes in every ministry and every household, for joy and strength and love and perseverance—or not. If every part of the engine is in working order but the spark plug fails to fire in its appointed rhythm, the whole car lurches or stops." (304)

“Preaching is worship. And preaching aims to awaken worship. Both worshipping and awakening worship are miracles.” (304).