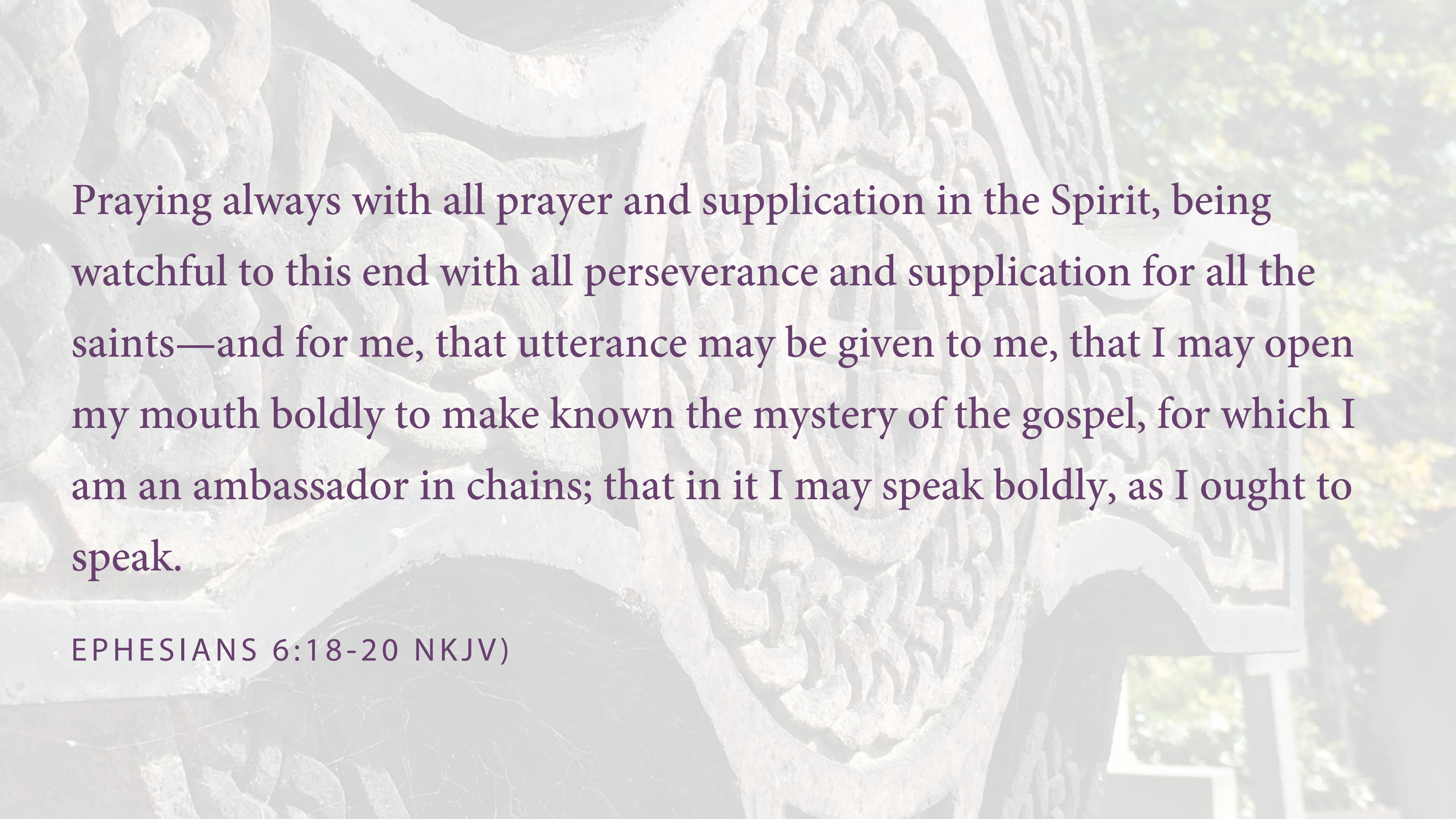


Sermon Planning and Preparation

Homiletics I: The Preparation of Expository Biblical Sermons

Michael A. Milton, PhD

*James H. Ragsdale Chair of Missions and Evangelism
President, D. James Kennedy Institute of Reformed Leadership*

The background of the image is a photograph of a stone archway with intricate carvings. The archway is made of light-colored stone and features a large, circular medallion in the center. The carvings are detailed and appear to be of historical or religious significance. In the foreground, there is a wooden bench with a curved backrest. The overall scene is set outdoors, with some greenery visible in the background.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

EPHESIANS 6:18-20 NKJV)

SERMON PLANNING



SERMON PLANNING IS LONG TERM

Plan through 1 to 3-year cycles.

Plan in Tracks of Normative, Festive-Civic, & Crisis

TRACK 1: NORMATIVE (LECTIONARY; SERMON SERIES)

This is on a long cycle (1 year up to 3 years)



TRACK 2: FESTIVE (CHURCH YEAR) AND CIVIC (E.G., THANKSGIVING)

This may be a single Lord's Day; or a shorter series on, e.g., 4 Sundays in Advent



TRACK 3: CRISIS

This may be a single Lord's Day for a catastrophe, war, or any large-scale and undoubtedly distracting event (the Super Bowl is NOT one of those; an earthquake is).



A dark, atmospheric photograph of a cemetery. In the foreground and middle ground, several large, ornate gravestones are visible, including tall Celtic crosses and rounded tombstones. The background shows a dense field of smaller graves under a heavy, overcast sky with dark, swirling clouds. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

SERMON PREPARATION

Sermon Preparation is Long-term (e.g., 1-3 Years)

The weekly pastoral work of rightly dividing the Word of God to feed the flock of Christ and equip them for the work of ministry. Sermon Preparation is built upon the foundation of study and prayer of sermon planning (1-3 year-cycles with special festive-civic, and crisis layers)

A large, rough-hewn stone cross is the central visual element, set against a clear blue sky. The cross is made of a light-colored, textured stone, possibly granite or limestone, with visible grain and some weathering. It has a traditional Latin cross shape but with very thick, blocky arms and a slightly irregular, hand-carved appearance. The cross is positioned diagonally, with its top-left corner pointing towards the upper left of the frame and its base extending towards the bottom right. The background is a solid, clear blue sky, which provides a high-contrast backdrop for the stone cross.

Sermon Preparation is Immediate (e.g., Sunday to Sunday)

The weekly pastoral work of rightly dividing the Word of God to feed the flock of Christ and equip them for the work of ministry. Sermon Preparation is built upon the foundation of study and prayer of sermon planning (1-3 year-cycles with special festive-civic, and crisis layers)

Questioning the Text to Locate the Holy Spirit's Intent

START WITH PRAYER.

Pray and Meditate.

Conclude on Sunday morning with prayer.

WAIT ON THE LORD TO GUIDE YOU.

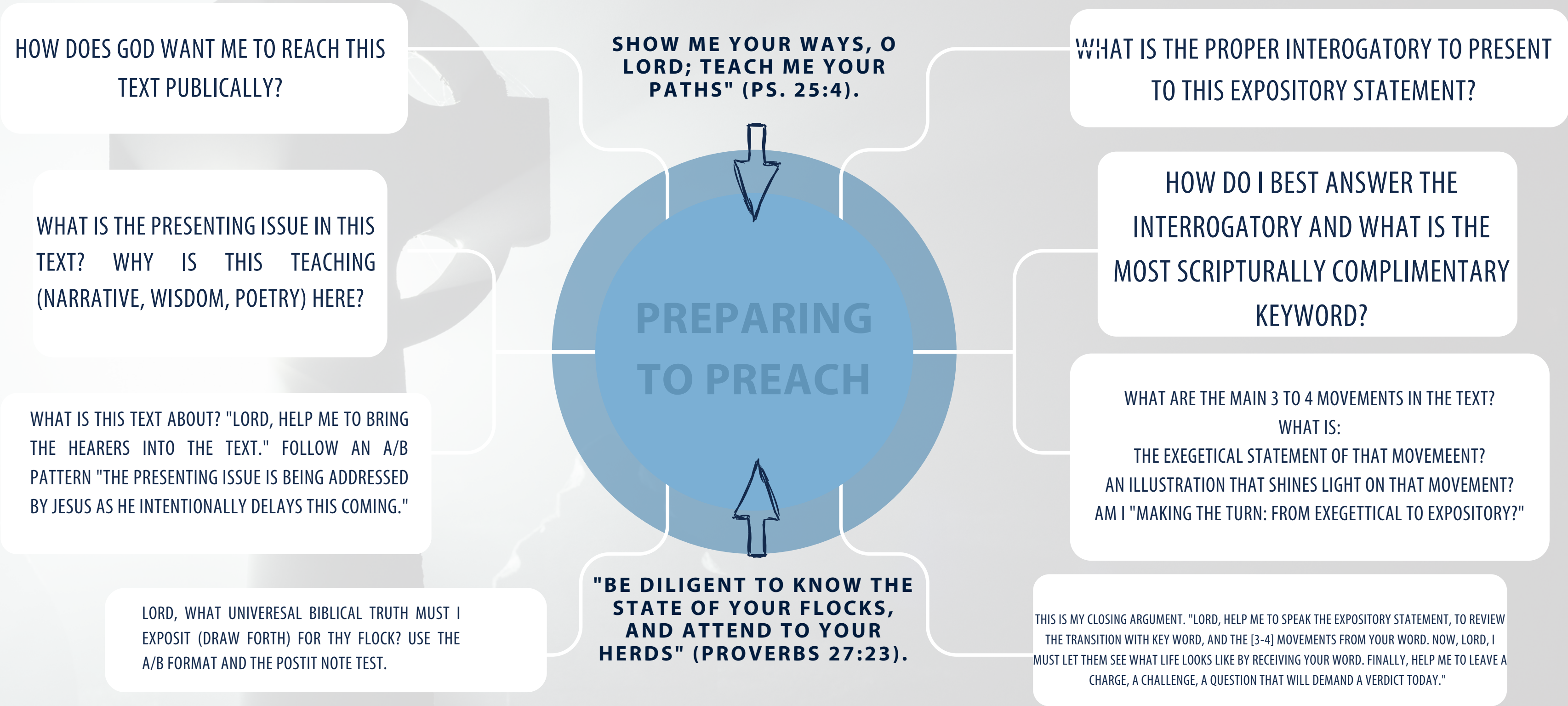
Be There.

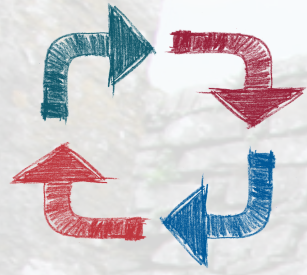
The Lord will use His People to help you understand their needs, their misunderstandings, their courage, their faith, and their struggle. Visit, counsel, formal and informal.

PREACH IT TO YOURSELF.

Look at them. Love them. Speak to them.

Visualize the sermon as you move through the eight elements of an expository sermon.





A SUGGESTED WEEK OF SERMON PREPARATION

Pray without ceasing that you may proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ with Biblical Faithfulness and with urgency.

First Iteration: Monday

Pray ➡ Read silently and publically ➡ What are the issues in the Text for public reading ➡ Question Presenting Issue and write it out ➡ Question the Exegetical Issue and write it out ➡ First pass at Expository Statement ➡ Select an Interrogatory Statement with Key Word ➡ Complete the expository & exegetical headings in the Argument ➡ Closing Argument: Recap & check logical flow ➡ Read silently and publicly ➡ Pray for to rightly divide the Word, rightly proclaim the Word to self, and for others

Second Iteration: Thursday

Pray ➡ Read ➡ Resolve public readings (use pencil marks if need to check for the major elocution marks: Pronunciation-Pace-Pitch-Pause ➡ Closing argument ➡ Write out manuscript

Third Iteration

Walk through each of the 8 Essential Elements ➡ Question each movement. Does it answer what came before? Does it anticipate what comes next? Is the 3rd movement of the Closing Argument God's appeal from His Word?

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

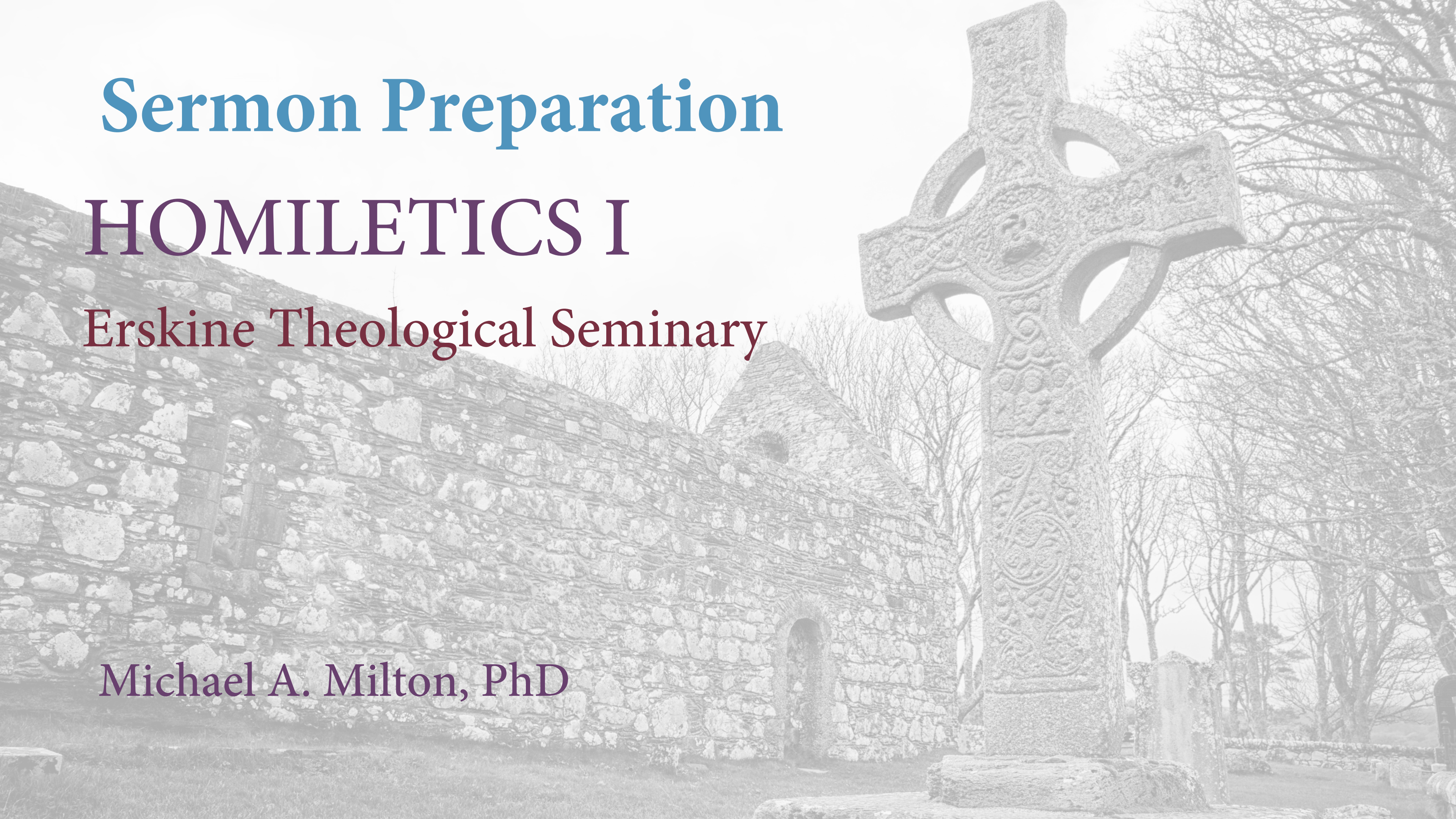
Friday

Saturday

Exegete
Staff/Flock

Miscellaneous Remarks on Sermon Preparation

- In Sermon Planning: Share your 1–3 year Sermon Plan (both tracks) with your Director of music and staff.
- Consider a final document with liturgical movement content (Call to Worship, Affirmation of Faith, Assurance of Pardon, et cetera) with the Texts and Sermon working title)
- Give a copy to your session and ask for prayer.
- In Sermon Preparation, you question the text in each of the 8 events. Compose your responses. Only consult commentaries afterwards.
- Use your Erskine-provided Logos Bible software to create templates, and study sets.
- Write a manuscript but preach from notes in first seven years of ministry. Seek to move to manuscript and no notes by year eight. This allows time to internalize the rhythms and movements of the Expository method.
- Use Saturday morning to review.
- Gather a prayer group of officers to pray each Sunday morning for (1) God's Message (2) God's Spirit to come down on Preacher and People, and (3) God's Gospel to transform, heal, save, renew, and restore.
- As you are before the People, let your eyes move across the flock, in prayerful anticipation.
- Preach as if never to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men (from Richard Baxter)



Sermon Preparation

HOMILETICS I

Erskine Theological Seminary

Michael A. Milton, PhD