



## Ecclesiology: The Study of the Church

### Lesson 23: Expository Preaching: True Spirituality

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#### INTRODUCTION

##### What Is Expository Preaching?

Simply stated, expository preaching is preaching that takes the main point of a text of Scripture, makes that the main point of the sermon, and applies it to life today. Expository preaching is preaching that *exposes* or *explains* the meaning of Scripture and brings it to bear on our lives.

Since the goal of expository preaching is simply to explain and apply God's Word, we're going to take a step back for this first study and think about why God's Word is so important for the life and health of the church.

##### What Is True Spirituality?

In this study we are going to consider the question, What is true spirituality? That's a question on a lot of people's minds today, not just Christians. While being "religious" is decidedly unpopular, spirituality is in our society today.

1. What are some things you've heard non-Christians or Christians say about spirituality? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### MAIN IDEA

True spirituality consists in hearing, believing, and obeying God's Word. That is why God's Word is the source of the church's life and health, and why pastors should preach expositively.

#### DIGGING IN

##### Psalm 19

1. Verses 1–6 focus on one way God makes Himself known and verses 7–11 focus on another. How would you summarize the two ways God reveals Himself that are celebrated in this psalm? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What do we learn about God from His revelation of Himself in creation (vv. 1–6)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What can't the creation teach us about God and about how we are to relate to Him? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What do the terms law (v. 7), testimony (v. 7), precepts (v. 8), commandment (v. 8), and rules (v. 9) all refer to? What does this suggest about how God communicates to us? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. List the things David says God's Word does in verses 7–11.
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Describe the human need or situation each of these actions addresses.
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Based on this passage, how would you respond to someone who said that true spirituality is too deep for words? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Another passage that demonstrates the absolute centrality of God's Word in the Christian life is the familiar story of Mary and Martha.

**Luke 10:38–42**

8. Describe Martha's activity and mind-set that we see in this passage. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. Suppose we didn't have Jesus's words in verses 41–42, and you wanted to defend Martha. How might you make a case for why she is more spiritual than Mary? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

10. What does Jesus commend Mary for doing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. What does Jesus mean when He says that listening to His teaching is the “one thing” that is necessary? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

These two passages teach us that hearing, believing, and obeying God’s Word is absolutely central to how we relate to God. The New Testament teaches that we’re born again through the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23); that we obtain faith through the Word of God (Rom. 10:17); that we grow in godliness through the Word of God (John 17:17); and that we receive encouragement and hope from the Word of God (Rom. 15:4). These are some of the reasons why God’s Word is the source and substance of true spirituality. True spirituality is a spirituality of the Word.

### **Why Pastors Should Preach Expositively**

Because God’s Word is the source and substance of true spirituality, pastors should preach sermons in which the main point of the text of Scripture is the main point of the sermon. Expository preaching is the starting point for a healthy church: God’s Word teaches us who He is, how we have sinned against Him, what He has done for us in Christ, what He requires of us in response, and how He provides everything we need—through His Word!—to bring Him glory.

12. In light of the two passages we’ve studied, how would you respond to someone who said that in order to be really spiritual we need to:

a) Contemplate images and icons that represent God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b) Pursue a direct, unmediated, mystical experience of the presence of God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c) Hear God speaking to us inwardly? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. How should this understanding of Word-centered spirituality shape:

a) What our churches do in their corporate gatherings? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b) How we evaluate sermons? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c) What we hope to get out of sermons? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

d) How we listen to sermons?<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Bobby Jamieson, *Hearing God's Word: Expository Preaching*, ed. Mark Dever, 9Marks Healthy Church Study Guides (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 15–19.