

2016

Preparing Transformational Sermons: An Attitudinal Model of Sermonic Application

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PREPARING TRANSFORMATIONAL SERMONS:
AN ATTITUDINAL MODEL OF SERMONIC APPLICATION

by

DONALD G. BRYANT JR.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Luther Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment of

The Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

2016

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ABSTRACT

Preparing Transformation Sermons: An Attitudinal Model of Sermonic Application

by

Donald G. Bryant Jr.

This mixed method, action-reflection project explores the results of attitudinal rather than a behavioral sermon-application model. The research project delves into the change in the listener's perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs through sermons deliberately designed for attitudinal application of the gospel. My project will attempt to assess whether such an intentional focus on attitudinal application can impact heart transformation. I hoped to study sermons that transform the human heart as opposed to legalistic (behavior-based) sermons within evangelical churches.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am very grateful to God for without His grace and blessings this research project would not have been possible.

Immeasurable appreciation and deepest gratitude for the help and support are extended to the following people who have in one way or another contributed in supporting this study.

Dean Paul Lokken, for his support and words of wisdom and encouragement. To Dr. Christopher Smith, my advisor, for his tireless support, advice, guidance, valuable comments, and suggestions that were offered toward the completion of this project. To Dr. Michael Rogness, for his wisdom direction tremendous support throughout the program.

Dean David Lose and Dr. Karoline Lewis, for initially inspiring and encouraging me to consider the program at Luther Seminary.

Dr. Frank A. Thomas, for being an example, mentor, and faithful scholar including providing the initial inspiration for this Thesis project.

Dr. Barbara Holmes, for the sincere encouragement and feedback in the early stages of the project idea.

To Rebecca Miller, my primary editor, for her advice, guidance, thorough and dependable support and service.

To the study subjects, for your support, corporation, and commitment.

To Charles and Christina Foy for the love and also editorial work during the project.

To Pastors Danny Langley and Ken Dexter, for graciously opening your churches and pulpits in order for me to complete the sermons necessary for this research project. To the people of Crosspointe Meadows Church and Overcomers Evangel Church for the support and willingness to participate in the interviews and surveys.

To Sheriah Little, who provided the necessary administrative support during the analysis of the data collected during the project.

To Dr. Sigrid Dixon and Pastor Timothy Brewington II, for your support, friendship, and valuable opinions during this project.

To One Community Church, I am grateful that our journey has started. The timing of this project was providentially planned and coincided with the start our community.

To my wife and kids for your moral support, understanding and encouragement. You have been the greatest source of strength and support I could have asked for through the course of this project. This is as much your accomplishment as it is mine.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMMRS	Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/ Spirituality
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians
Ed.	Edition
Eph.	Ephesians
Gal.	Galatians
Matt.	Matthew
MI	Michigan
Phil.	Philippians
Rom.	Romans
1 Tim.	1 Timothy
Q	Question

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The focus of much evangelical preaching is legalistic and seeks behavioral change in the listener instead of facilitating an experience of God's grace through the gospel message of Jesus Christ. The focus of evangelical preaching is often a response to a perceived need to reform society and culture, leading to the theological misconception that the listener must earn mercy and grace through behavioral modification. The danger is a performance-based gospel and can produce guilt or self-righteous behavior, rather than an emphasis on God's gracious acts toward humanity. In this thesis, I intend to challenge that focus of evangelical preaching and explore whether a primary focus on gospel-centered preaching will lead to the attitudinal transformation in the listener, whose conduct may change as a response. I will do this by anchoring my research sermons with attitudinal purpose statements.

According to Brian Chapell, application of the gospel may be attitudinal as well as behavioral.¹ Transformation of conduct (behavior) and the heart (attitude) are both legitimate goals of application.² At its core, attitudinal application of the gospel deals with one's heart. It speaks to how an individual's perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs are

¹ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, Second ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), Nook Book, 237.

² Ibid.

changed in response to hearing the gospel in the sermon. In *The Art of Prophesying*,

William Perkins states:

The basic principle in application is to know whether the passage is a statement of the law or of the gospel. For when the Word is preached, the law and the gospel operate differently. The law exposes the disease of sin, and as a side-effect, stimulates and stirs it up. But it provides no remedy for it. However the gospel not only teaches us what is to be done, it also has the power of the Holy Spirit joined to it. . . . A statement of the law indicates the need for a perfect inherent righteousness, of eternal life given through the works of the law, of the sins which are contrary to the law and of the curse that is due them. . . . By contrast, a statement of the gospel speaks of Christ and his benefits, and of faith being fruitful in good works.³

Therefore, it is critical in our preaching that we do not tell people all the ways they must be good without relating good deeds to the gospel. Additionally, we should never simply tell listeners that they can be saved only by grace without displaying and illustrating how salvation changes how we live.

The behavioral sermon model is widely used in evangelical churches. David Veerman suggests that the goal of biblical application should be to answer the question, “What should I do about [this Biblical passage] today?”⁴ James Earl Massey asserts that “application in the sermon points out the relation of what has been said to the hearer’s life; it calls attention to how what has been spoken is to be used, and why it is important to do so.”⁵ It is expected by many that these actions are how every sermon ought to conclude. According to John A. Broadus, “Application is the main thing to be done,”⁶

³ William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying and the Calling of the Ministry*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996), 54-55.

⁴ David Veerman, “Sermons: Apply Within,” *Christianity Today*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/1e/1990/spring/9012120.html> (accessed August 11, 2015).

⁵ James Earl Massey, *Application in the Sermon*, *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, edited by Michael Duda (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 209.

⁶ Jeff A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, Revised Edition ed. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1944), 210.

and many would argue that a sermon is not complete until a call to action is distinctly laid out by the preacher. And when this call to action is about our performance to be holy, instead of how holy God is, the unfortunate result is often legalism.

Research Question

In my thesis project, I plan to explore the results of an attitudinal—rather than behavioral—sermon-application model. I am interested in exploring the change in the listener’s perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs through sermons deliberately designed for attitudinal application of the gospel. My project will attempt to assess whether such an intentional focus on attitudinal application can impact heart transformation. To accomplish this, I will attempt to modify question number five in Frank A. Thomas’s preaching worksheet by replacing the “behavior purpose statement” with an “attitudinal purpose statement.”⁷ I am not suggesting that Thomas’s preaching worksheet is deficient or has legalistic intentions. On the contrary, I find it to be a very good model for sermonic structure. I am however, seeking to extend the use of this tool even further, in order to assess whether a deliberate focus on attitude as an outcome of specific sermonic structure will have an impact on the hearer’s heart: Will it produce a faith response impacting how the hearer lives?

By exploring this deliberate approach in the sermonic structure, I hope to provide a principle for redeeming preaching that has good intentions, but sometimes works against the living out of the gospel in day-to-day life.

Using Paul’s writing to Timothy as a sample text, “Let no one despise you for

⁷ Frank A. Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God*, Kindle Edition ed. (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2013), 1584.

your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12)⁸, let’s take a look at the two possible outcome statements. A potential behavioral purpose statement could be: “I propose to instruct youth on how to live a life that is an example of Christ. To the end the hearers will be moved to replicate Christ-like conduct, speech, etc.” On the other hand, the attitudinal purpose statement could be: “I propose to inspire youth to believe in what Christ has already done for us, trusting that this experience *naturally* leads to a generous, gracious response horizontally through speech, conduct, care, love, and patience, thus blessing the community around them. To that end, as a result of God’s active grace in the hearer’s life, they *will* live radically differently, extending grace to those around them.” The rhetoric used in the behavioral statement could lead to a focus on behavior as conduct. However, the rhetoric used in the attitudinal statement seems to provide more specificity in direction toward heart transformation.

Definitions and Assumptions

This project begins with several definitions and assumptions: First, what is the gospel? The gospel is defined as the good and true story that Jesus has defeated sin, death, and evil through his death and resurrection and is making all things—even us—new.⁹ This is the life-changing news of God’s inexhaustible grace being extended to all who believe.

⁸ English Standard Version. All other Scripture references will use the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

⁹ Jonathan Dodson, *The Unbelievable Gospel: Say Something Worth Believing*, Kindle ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2014), 110.

Secondly, the uses of the terms “behavioral” and “attitudinal” can be a bit confusing. Behavioral application, in respect to preaching the gospel, is used to describe sermons/messages that focus on a person’s conduct and deeds. In other words, what one must *do* to please God instead of a response to an *experience* of his grace. Attitudinal application, in respect to preaching the gospel, is used to describe sermons/messages that focus on impacting human hearts. Furthermore, attitudinal applications seek to address perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs.

It is also assumed that Thomas’s worksheet is just one of many models for sermon design. I could have selected others, but chose this due to my appreciation for its effectiveness in my own preaching. My attempt to add to it is not a critique of the current form but an indication of the value that I see in the worksheet.

The homiletical writing term “structure” is used to describe the layout and ordering of the sermon. For the purposes of this project, the term “structure” is used, particularly in regards to purpose statements used in the sermonic design.

Finally, both of the church contexts in which I will be conducting my investigation (Crosspointe Meadows Church in Novi, MI, and Overcomers Evangel Church, in Detroit, MI) have pastors serving who are not legalistic preachers; instead, these pastors have a passion for gospel-centric preaching.

Justification and Rationale for Study

No one can fault preachers who want to challenge the immorality of their listeners, but their attempts can mistakenly make moral instruction or reform—rather than the gospel—the primary focus of their preaching. Our preaching ought not convey the idea that the antidote for the problem of sin is behavioral modification. The gospel

does not lead us in instruction on how we can improve ourselves in order to gain God's acceptance. Rather, it teaches us that all our attempts are inadequate to achieve divine approval and that it is His work that is fully, undeniably, and unstopably sufficient.

Martin Luther is reported to have said, "The Law is for the proud and the Gospel for the brokenhearted."¹⁰ In other words, the law is for those who have hard hearts, and the gospel is for those who have broken hearts. Chapell writes that an attempt to make ourselves right "fails to recognize the unconditional nature of [God's] grace and the inadequacy of our best works to compensate God for his inestimable gift."¹¹ We are completely and entirely dependent upon the mercy and grace provided to us through Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke to this in the Gospel of John: "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). In other words, our strength comes from who we are in Christ.

I would not argue against the preacher's (or any Christian's) right and responsibility to address sin. The book of James certainly does argue that sin is to be confronted, acknowledged, and dealt with (James 5:19-20). However, when this is done, the motivation is love and not judgment or condemnation. In fact, when we truly understand the significance of what God's grace has done in our own lives, then we are compelled and moved to live a life of obedience, care, and generosity. It is that our vertical relationship (relationship with God) impacts how we live horizontally (relationship with others). Thus, preaching that causes one to theologically see, think,

¹⁰ Martin Luther, "Law and Gospel," Monergism, <http://www.monergism.com/topics/law-and-gospel> (accessed August 14, 2015).

¹¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 12.

and believe differently has tremendous ramifications that necessarily impact our families, communities, and individual personal lives.

It is this precise tension in sermonic design, between behavioral and attitudinal application, that has inspired me to consider the theory behind sermon thesis—or purpose—statements. I have heard some great preachers and experienced some great sermons over the years. Though both behavioral and attitudinal applications within sermons are biblical, I have personally experienced heart transformation from sermons that were attitudinal in focus. The question I am seeking to answer more broadly is this: Can designing the sermon to include a focused attitudinal purpose statement assist in overcoming legalistic preaching in evangelical churches?

Context and the Broader Church

Sermons that focus on attitudinal application will be essential, as we have now moved into a secular age. James Smith in his book *How (Not) To Be Secular*, a commentary on Charles Taylor's book *A Secular Age*, argues, "We can't tolerate living in a world without meaning."¹² In other words, every human being is longing for meaning, purpose, satisfaction, and identity. As Christians, we believe that the gospel is the good news of God's grace toward humanity through Jesus Christ. He alone is able to satisfy our ultimate longing for meaning. In John 6:27, Jesus states, "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life." He suggests that there is food available (idols) that will attempt to fill and fulfill us but that in the end this food ultimately perishes (dissatisfies). He then proclaims, with great clarity, "I am the bread

¹² James K. A. Smith, *Now (Not) to Be Secular*, Kindle ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans 2014), 47.

of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). He alone is the one who never dissatisfies and who has come to fill every void. King David even spoke of the “satisfying” nature of God, in Psalm 145:19, when he states, “He fulfills the desire of those who fear him.” The word desire means longing, yearning, or craving. In other words, the Lord fulfills (satisfies) the longings of our hearts.

Taylor argues that, in the secular age, we are experiencing “exclusive humanism.”¹³ Ours is a culture that believes we can control our own future and set our own destiny outside of any divine involvement. Therefore, as Smith argues, the secular age is not a life or culture absent of religion or faith, but a culture seeking meaning to adequately replace it.¹⁴

One of the contributing factors to what our culture has become is what Taylor calls the “nova effect.”¹⁵ This is the explosion of all the different competing options that are attempting to address our longing for meaning. People are now experiencing intense pressure from these competing sources of meaning. The nova effect is *how* people are trying to solve life and fill the void in their hearts *within* these many and various possibilities. We as Christians don’t get to name the “solution” (the gospel of Jesus Christ) to humanity’s struggle as easily as we once did five hundred years ago. Christianity is now just one of many options. Given our new reality, our preaching must take consideration of these cultural changes.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 62.

One approach to dealing with the competing sources of meaning in our world today is to acknowledge in our preaching the universal experiences of human brokenness and longing for meaning. Knowing that other sources of nourishment will perish or fail to satisfy, the gospel can be preached and shared as the best alternative to fill the void contained within the human heart. Presenting the gospel alongside the idols that we often use to fulfill our needs will lead to the conclusion that the gospel is the only possible solution for the human heart condition.

Chapell says, “Evangelical preachers reacting to the secularization of both culture and church mistakenly make moral instruction or societal reform the primary focus of their messages.”¹⁶ Graeme Goldsworthy, in *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, suggests that legalistic preaching may be common because “We are legalists at heart. We would love to be able to say that we have fulfilled all kinds of conditions, be they tarrying, surrendering fully, or getting rid of every known sin, so that God might truly bless us.”¹⁷ In other words, there is a self-focused benefit from this experience.

Don Koenig, who believes that there are legalists in all denominations, suggests “many legalists in both the Baptist and the Pentecostal denominations can be found beating up on their flock each Sunday to try to whip them into Christian shape.”¹⁸ I was raised in an evangelical Pentecostal church, which emphasized righteous living. To a

¹⁶ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 19.

¹⁷ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 118.

¹⁸ Don Koenig, “Christian Legalism - the Dark Side of Christianity,” *The Prophetic Years*, <http://www.thepropheticyears.com/comments/The%20dark%20side%20of%20Christianity.htm> (accessed May 5, 2015).

certain degree, I can understand what Mark Baker says about the churches he studied in Honduras: “The evangelical emphasis on rules has apparently overwhelmed the doctrine of grace.”¹⁹ He states that “evangelicals are best known for their strict observance of rules, such as no drinking, no dancing, no drugs, and no smoking.”²⁰

The problem of legalism can also be found in the broader Church. David Prince argues, “Much preaching in Christian churches is a simple collection of legalistic moralisms.”²¹ He goes on to add, “Legalism is the pursuit of good works abstracted from faith in an effort to garner God’s favor and blessing. Moralism is the attempt to obey or impose the ethical commands of the Bible abstracted from the gospel of Jesus Christ.”²² Tim Keller adds, “On the one hand, ‘moralism/religion’ stresses truth without grace, for it says that we must obey the truth in order to be saved. On the other hand, ‘relativism/irreligion’ stresses grace without truth.”²³

Jesus said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30). Later, Jesus criticized the Pharisees, saying, “They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders” (Matt. 23:4). Jesus wants us to exchange our yoke for his yoke. He has done for us what we could never do for ourselves. As

¹⁹ Mark D. Baker, “Is This the Gospel: An Evaluation of the Legalism Present in Churches in a Tegucigalpa Barrio,” *Missiology: An International Review* XXV, no. No. 4 (1997): 407.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 406.

²¹ David Prince, “Why Legalistic Preaching Does Not Work,” Prince on Preaching, <http://www.davidprince.com/2014/05/06/legalistic-preaching-work/> (accessed May 6, 2015).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Timothy J. Keller, “Centrality of the Gospel,” Redeemer Presbyterian Church, http://download.redeemer.com/pdf/learn/resources/Centrality_of_the_Gospel-Keller.pdf (accessed August 12, 2015).

Christians, we live with the confidence that the work of the cross is fully sufficient. We don't have to repay God for anything. The focus of the Christian faith is not our production for God, but God's production for us in Jesus. It's not the offering we make for God, but it's the offering God made for us in Jesus. It's not most importantly and initially about our actions but God's actions for us in Jesus.

Sermons should shift the focus away from being “us-centric” and put the focus back on Jesus and what he has done (“Christ-centric”). Sermons that do this meet the needs of the human heart. Inevitably, our response to God’s grace is a desire to live for him. Only through a fresh telling of the gospel story can we be liberated to experience the true glory of God. We must show how the person and work of Jesus Christ bear on the individual hearer and on the congregation’s shared life experience. On a congregational level and within the broader Church, rediscovery of the gospel message’s centrality in preaching is critical.

In this chapter, I showed the problem I am attempting to solve and provided the justification and rationale for addressing that problem. I discussed how the problem has been viewed in the past, and some key definitions and terms of the project. I explained how this thesis project will benefit me, our local church, and other preachers (or teachers) of the gospel.

In chapter two, I intend to provide an overview of and insight on how the problem has been viewed theologically by the Church over time and how this theological and biblical framework informs the way I am approaching the thesis problem.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I plan to lay out the theological reflection and biblical framework for how preaching has been viewed theologically by the Church over time, as well as the biblical insights and foundations associated with it. Additionally, I will explore how this theological and biblical framework informs the way I am approaching the problem.

Biblical Confrontation of Legalism

The issue of legalism traces back to both Jewish and early Christian history. Jesus had more issues with the legalists of his time than with any other group. For example, it was the Pharisees, who in their attempt to keep the letter of the law, deviated from focusing on the heart of the law, spending more time on outward deeds and added man-made laws. Jesus challenged the Pharisees on one particular occasion as they spent more time on cleaning their serveware and drinkware and not enough on the cleansing of their hearts (Luke 11:39). In this story, Jesus appears to be more concerned with the cleaning of the inner person and not just the exterior. Even the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 is a scathing critique by Jesus against legalism as he connects the response by the elder brother in the story to the behavior of the Pharisees.

In the early history of the Church, Paul laid the theological argument for salvation by grace alone instead of by works:

For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in

Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law. (Rom. 3:19-28)

No one who relies on his deeds, performance, or observance of the law will be declared righteous before God. The message of the gospel of God's grace is a message of what God has *already* done through Christ that necessarily makes the difference in our lives. It is faith in this great proclamation that causes—or better yet, compels—me to live a life of generosity, graciousness, love, kindness, and care.

In chapter 4 of Romans, Paul lays out the argument that our faith is a response to this truth. He says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:3). He makes it clear that Abraham's *faith* is counted—not his deeds. Paul also is clear that we are justified by faith, not works, and that we have peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). In the letter to the Galatians, he further argues “that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified” (Gal. 2:21). Therefore, it is the righteousness of Christ that is lifted up before God and accepted on our behalf, and we are declared to be the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).

In the letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul wrote: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). Again, Paul makes plain that grace is a gift that is given, not one that is earned. In another letter, he recounts his experience of being “found in [Christ], not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith” (Phil. 3:9).

The Theology of God’s Grace

Much later, German theologian Martin Luther, in his *Ninety-Five Theses* advocated a theology that focused on God’s gracious activity through Jesus Christ and not on human works.²⁴ He argued that justification is not based on human righteousness, but rather on the righteousness of God as he fought against the works-righteousness teachings of the Roman Catholic Church at that time. These teachings of the church, placed an emphasis on human deeds to restore one’s place with God. In his *Commentary on Galatians*, Luther states that a “new creature is one in whom the image of God has been renewed. Such a creature cannot be brought into life by good works, but by Christ alone.”²⁵

Luther’s proclamation began the Protestant Reformation and led to a rediscovery of the message of salvation by grace alone. Although the message of the gospel is clear, legalistic preaching still exists within the contemporary church. There are two mind-set

²⁴ Martin Luther, “The Ninety-Five Theses,” (1517).

²⁵ Martin Luther, “Martin Luther's Commentary on Galatians 6:15,” Study Light, <http://www.study-light.org/commentaries/mlg/view.cgi?bk=47&ch=6> (accessed April 8th, 2015).

errors that one could fall into, thereby losing sight of the gospel and its power. The first mind-set is antinomianism and the other is legalism. These two words, “antinomianism” and “legalism,” are derived from the Greek and Latin word for “law.” Legalism can be understood as “law-ism” and antinomianism can be understood as “anti-law-ism” or lawlessness. The most notable book of the Bible where these mind-sets are both discussed is in Romans. According to Keller,

“In Romans 1:18-32, Paul shows that because the pagan Gentiles disregard God’s law— and so are anti-law—they have lost any connection to him. Then in Romans 2:1-3:20 Paul proceeds to argue that law-abiding, Bible-believing Jews are alienated from God too. Why? Because they rely on their law keeping rather than on God’s grace for their relationship with God and therefore they are legalists. They seek a “righteousness of [their] own.”²⁶

Furthermore, the landmark treatise of nineteenth-century Scottish Presbyterian minister John Colquhoun sheds light on this:

When a man is driven to acts of obedience by the dread of God’s wrath revealed in the law and not drawn to them by the belief of his love revealed in the gospel; when he fears God because of his power and justice, and not because of his goodness; when he regards God more as an avenging Judge, than as a compassionate Friend and Father; and when he contemplates God rather as terrible in majesty than as infinite in grace and mercy; he shews that he is under the dominion, or at least under the prevalence, of a legal spirit.²⁷

Colquhoun continues, “Believers are, in their justification, delivered likewise from the condemning power of the law as a covenant.”²⁸ For him, justification breaks the power and dominion of sin and frees the redeemed person to live out his or her sanctification.²⁹

²⁶ Timothy J. Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, Kindle ed. (New York: Penguin Publishing Group 2015), 600.

²⁷ John Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Law and Gospel* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1999 (originally 1819)), 143-144.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 211-212.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 237, 240.

He goes on to say, “To pretend to sanctification, and then to rely on it for justification, is to derive the fountain from the stream, the cause from the effect, and so to invert the order of the blessings of salvation. It is necessary that our sins are forgiven, and our persons accepted as righteous in the sight of God, in order to our being capable of yielding the least degree of acceptable obedience to Him.”³⁰

Preaching and Attitudinal Change

Biblical communicators must always have these two views of life in mind as we preach and teach. Individual texts usually contain exhortations on how believers should live, which expounded in isolation from the rest of the Bible, could support the legalistic view. Other passages will depict God’s gracious provision of salvation and unconditional love, which in isolation could give the impression that free grace does not lead to life change. In *The Art of Prophesying*, William Perkins writes, “preachers need to know the true relationship of law to gospel.”³¹ The law can show us our need for the gospel, and then, once we embrace God’s salvation by faith, the law becomes the way to know, serve, and grow into the likeness of the one who saved us.³²

The good news is that Jesus and his teachings are more concerned with a heart change than anything else. Thought, will, and emotions are all parts of the biblical and theological understanding of the human heart. The Bible has a lot to say about the heart’s importance and how the gospel is applied. In Matthew 6:21, Jesus says that the

³⁰ Ibid., 309.

³¹ Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying and the Calling of the Ministry*, 54.

³² Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, 615-620.

location where we store up our wealth is the place that ultimately has our heart: “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

In “Applying Gracefully,” Scott Hoezee suggests that the New Testament presents the preached gospel as a real and relevant announcement that something big has just happened. He writes that “at its core, each sermon in Acts and elsewhere in the New Testament is a proclamation of grace, of the glorious fact that God had been in Christ to reconcile the world to himself and the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross accomplished once and for all what human beings could never accomplish on their own: salvation.”³³ This proclamation, this good news is—to reference George Stevens’s 1965 movie—*The Greatest Story Ever Told*.

The Greek word for “heart” is *kardia*. Like the Hebrew word *leb*, *kardia* denotes the center and seat of all spiritual life.³⁴ Therefore, the biblical understanding of the human heart is inclusive of the will, thoughts, and feelings of a person. Jesus also seems to understand the heart as the seat of one’s understanding, reasoning, and thought. In Luke 6:43-46, Jesus says:

For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:43-46)

It is clear from these passages that our hearts—and not just our actions—need to be transformed. Our actions are important, but Jesus makes it clear that our hearts determine the fruit that we bear. As Carson writes, “Good conduct can come only out of

³³ Scott Hoezee, “Applying Gracefully,” *Calvin Theological Journal* no. 47 (2012): 241.

³⁴ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2011).

a good heart.”³⁵ The heart of repentance involves a change of mind. When a person comes to experience the gospel, he or she is committing to a new way of thinking about Jesus Christ and to his plan and purposes in life.

This is not an exhaustive summary, but the Bible does have a lot to say about the heart’s importance, providing a solid foundation for an exploration of the impact deliberately designed sermons have on heart (attitudinal) transformation.

The clearest scriptures on preaching Christ may be found in 1 Corinthians 1:21-24 and 2:1-5:

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. 1:21-24)

And I, when I came to you, brothers, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:1-5)

Paul challenges and confronts the cultural narratives of both the Jews and the Greeks. He then speaks to the longings of each group. To the Greeks, who wanted wisdom, he says, “look at Jesus and the cross, the true personification of wisdom.” To the Jews, who wanted power, he says, “look at Jesus and the cross; there is no greater power than a power that can do for us what we are incapable of doing for ourselves.”

After making it clear that he did not come to speak “big words,” Paul made it

³⁵ D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* 4th ed. (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 991.

clear that he came to “know nothing” while with them but “Jesus Christ and him crucified.” At this point in history, the only scripture available was the Old Testament. And yet, while preaching from these texts, Paul *still* “knew nothing” but “Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

In 1 Corinthians 1:21-24, according to Keller, “Paul clarifies each cultural narrative, then confronts each of its idolatries—the intellectual hubris of the Greeks and the works-righteousness of the Jews—showing them that the way they have been pursuing their greatest and proper goods is sinful and self-defeating. Yet this is no mere intellectual exercise or clever rhetorical strategy—it is an act of love and care.”³⁶

Keller further states that “sound preaching arises out of two loves—love of the Word of God and love of people—and from them both a desire to show people God’s glorious grace. And so, while only God can open hearts, the communicator must give great time and thought both to presenting the truth accurately and to bringing it home to the hearts and lives of the hearers.”³⁷ Paul was an example of this love and careful thought in his discourse with Festus:

And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.” But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words.” (Acts 26:24-25)

When Paul preached the gospel to the political leaders of his day, he described his messages as “true and rational,” and yet to his audience he seemed “out of his mind.” The same is true today: what Christians think is true and reasonable appears to be absurd and unbelievable to a large percentage of the population.

³⁶ Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, 267-270.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 206-209.

Legalistic preaching directs us to the false promise that our identity is formed and framed within our human performance toward God. To truly reach the human heart, preachers must contest the cultural story at “points of confrontation and finally retell the culture’s story,”³⁸ revealing its intrinsic longing for meaning, significance, identity, and satisfaction and declaring how ultimate fulfillment is found only in Christ Jesus.

In this chapter, I laid out the theological and biblical frameworks through which preaching has been viewed by the church over time. I explained how these frameworks inform my approach to the problem of legalistic preaching and to the need for preaching that targets attitudinal change. In the next chapter I will provide a description of previously published works that are relevant and important to the research question I am exploring. I will attempt to demonstrate how my thesis is unique in relation to prior investigations and how it will advance the practice of preaching.

³⁸ Ibid., 257.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I will provide a description of previously published works that are relevant and important to the research question I am exploring. I will attempt to demonstrate how my thesis is unique in relation to prior investigations and how it will advance the practice of preaching. My literary research has taken me on a journey to explore the history and theology behind sermonic theme statements, or purpose statements. There are a variety of forms. This journey has led me to consider the tension between purpose statements that unintentionally focus on application as behavioral (conduct) and application as attitudinal (heart). My literary search was centered on four particular areas: (1) sermon application, (2) literature on legalistic preaching in the Church, (3) theme sentences and structure with a focus on purpose statements, and (4) preaching in a postmodern culture.

Application of Preaching

Sermon application is important not only to the listeners, but also to the preacher. Scott Hoezee's journal article "Applying Gracefully" provides a summary of perspectives on sermon application. He explains how sermons came to be required (in the minds of listeners) to deliver a practical, applicable payoff for daily living in ways many other forms of art, literature, and education are not. In our culture, people are looking for a quick way to get to a desired result. During the years Hoezee was Director

of Calvin Theological Seminary's Center for Excellence, the question he was asked most was, "How do I do application in my preaching?"³⁹

Different preachers and scholars have different views on what should comprise the application in a sermon. Bryan Chapell's book *Christ-Centered Preaching* is now a classic on this topic. In a chapter entitled "Practice for Application," he lays out the function, components, and structure of application.⁴⁰ The sermon, to Chapell, is not just about delivering information. The objective is a lived-out response, by the people (application), to God's active grace, in ways that are inspired by the sermon. He suggests that we should preach sermons that "will not simply tell people to hunker down and try harder this week, but will lead them to understand that Christ's work rather than their own provides the only hope of Christian obedience."⁴¹ Chapell argues that "when people walk away from a message understanding that grace both motivates and enables them to serve God, futile human striving and vain self-vaunting vanish."⁴² No matter how imperfect the preacher's words, God's restoring and redeeming work in Christ must be the center proclamation of the sermon.

In his book *Preaching? Simple Teaching on Simply Preaching*, Alec Motyer argues that preachers have two responsibilities when we preach: "First to the truth, and secondly to this particular group of people. How will they best hear the truth? How are we to shape and phrase it so that it comes home to them in a way that is palatable, that

³⁹ Hoezee, "Applying Gracefully," 238.

⁴⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 236-241.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 289.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 310.

gains the most receptive hearing, and ... avoids needless hurt?"⁴³ The gospel truth speaks to the heart. When the gospel of Jesus Christ is contextually preached, ears are opened and hearts are changed. This is what I would describe as attitudinal application of the sermon.

David Veerman writes that application is simply “answering two questions: (1) So what? (2) Now what?”⁴⁴ John A. Broadus adds that “application, in the strict sense, is that part, or those parts, of the discourse in which we show how the subject applies to the persons addressed, what practical instructions it offers them, what practical demands it makes upon them.”⁴⁵ On one hand, Broadus’s focus could be interpreted as behavioral application. On the other hand, his definition of application could be one way of looking at how the sermon’s instructions and demands are “lived out,” or how the sermon impacts the listener attitudinally. With this understanding, “living it out” would be a response to the heart being touched by the grace and mercy of God.

James Earl Massey writes that “application in the sermon points out the relation of what has been said to the hearer’s life; it calls attention to how what has been spoken is to be used, and why it is important to do so.”⁴⁶ Massey’s definition is one way of looking at attitudinal application. Therefore, attitudinal application in a sermon points out how what has been said about God relates to the hearer’s life. It calls attention to how what has been spoken about God is significant to the listeners.

⁴³ Alec Motyer, *Preaching? Simple Teaching on Simply Preaching* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2013), 65.

⁴⁴ Veerman, “Sermons: Apply Within,” 121.

⁴⁵ Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 91.

⁴⁶ Massey, *Application in the Sermon*, 209.

Timothy Keller further states:

“A good sermon is not like a club that beats upon the will but like a sword that cuts to the heart (Acts 2:37). At its best it pierces to our very foundations, analyzing and revealing us to ourselves (Hebrews 4:12). It must build on Bible exposition, for people have not understood a text unless they see how it bears on their lives. Helping people see this is the task of application, and it is much more complicated than is usually recognized.”⁴⁷

To Keller, good application should not burden the listeners of the sermon but reveal God’s grace, which compels us to live our lives generously. This leads me to suspect that intentional designing for attitudinal application in a sermon could provide practical benefits to those who hear these sermons.

Literature on Legalistic Preaching in the Church

In *Christ-Centered Preaching*, Chapell speaks to the unintended consequences when evangelical preachers make moral reform the goal of their preaching.⁴⁸ He also points to the fact that preaching legalistically can happen accidentally if preachers are not careful to keep the focus on Christ’s work, not ours. Arthur W. Pink clarifies rightly that:

Evangelical preaching is that preaching which accords with the spirit and substance of the Gospel of God. It is that preaching which is tainted neither with legality nor licentiousness: which gives full place to both the grace of God and the righteousness of God. It maintains the claims of Divine holiness without bringing the soul into bondage. It proclaims a free salvation without making light of sin. It presents a Saviour who is suited to and sufficient for the very chief of sinners, yet affirms that only those who have been brought to loathe themselves and are sick of sin will welcome such a holy Physician. It announces the glorious liberty into which the sons of God have been brought and urges them to stand fast in the same, yet it also points out that such liberty is the very reverse of being a license granted us to indulge the lusts of the flesh without fear of consequences. While denying that good works enter at all into the ground of our

⁴⁷ Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, 286-289.

⁴⁸ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 19.

acceptance by God, care is taken to show that a faith which does not produce good works is worthless and saves no one.⁴⁹

Thus, according to Pink, although it will necessarily produce life change, at its core evangelical preaching is gospel centered and not legalistic.

David Prince, in his article “Why Legalistic Preaching Does Not Work,” stands against contemporary legalistic preaching. He argues:

In legalistic sermons, the law does not function as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24), but as a sadistic captor who does not plan on killing his prisoner but keeping him alive for the purpose of torture. The legalistic preacher makes the hearer a prisoner who lives in constant pain and torment but who always believes that freedom might be just around the corner.⁵⁰

Furthermore, he states that legalistic sermons encourage “comparisons with others. And that one’s identity is shaped by the perception of how their obedience measures up with others.”⁵¹ Finally, legalistic preaching, according to Prince, produces a “malformed church community in which hearing a positive accomplishment by someone else often deflates and depresses others because they feel the need to keep up their spiritual resume. Hearers are trained to seek identity in performance—not Christ, and the result is a graceless community.”⁵² In fact, such preaching leads to the idolatry of self-righteousness, in which one seeks identity ultimately in one’s own righteousness, instead of the righteousness of Christ.

Prince suggests that Christ-centered, “faithful preaching pulls hearers into the amazingly diverse but unified biblical storyline so they can find themselves in Jesus and

⁴⁹ Arthur W. Pink, “Evangelical Preaching,” Eternal Life Ministries, http://www.eternallifeministries.org/awp_epreach.htm (accessed October 12, 2015).

⁵⁰ Prince, “Why Legalistic Preaching Does Not Work.”

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

the story of his kingdom. Any biblical truth abstracted from the gospel is corrupted. When we ignore the relationship of any biblical truth to the gospel of Jesus Christ we lose biblical perspective and corrupt God's good gift."⁵³ Preaching that transforms the heart is always gospel centered seated in biblical truth of God's grace toward humanity.

Legalism is a problem throughout the Christian world. Mark Baker has studied evangelical churches in Honduras and evaluated the effect legalism has had there.⁵⁴ Baker's research considered how "legalism refers not just to strict or literal conformity to a code of rules, but includes the sense that conformity to these rules is required for salvation or acceptance by God."⁵⁵ When Mark asked members of the local church to finish the phrase "A Christian is someone who . . .," what he found was that almost all of the respondents focused entirely on behavior modification of the individual. Only a few in the church identified "belief in Christ of forgiveness of sins in their answer." Don Koenig, in the article "Christian Legalism—The Dark Side of Christianity," speaks to the legalism in evangelical Baptist and Pentecostal traditions.⁵⁶ He believes there is one thing most legalists have in common: "They all assume that any others that do not see things their way are not even Christian."⁵⁷ According to Koenig, legalists, in their self-righteousness, often condemn anyone who is not in absolute theological agreement and behavioral conformity with them.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Baker, "Is This the Gospel: An Evaluation of the Legalism Present in Churches in a Tegucigalpa Barrio."

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Koenig, "Christian Legalism - the Dark Side of Christianity."

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Graeme Goldsworthy argues that legalistic preaching is common in the broader Church.⁵⁸ Legalistic preaching is wrong because it places a burden on the work of humanity. He contends “the center and reference point for the meaning of all Scripture is the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God.”⁵⁹ That means we as preachers, are not simply preachers of the Bible but preachers of the gospel, preachers of Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Theme Sentences and Theological Structure

A theme sentence is the topic sentence of a sermon. It is the sentence that articulates the objective or goal of the sermon. It is, at the same time, broad and specific on the details of what the sermon is about. It is statement or sentence that is derived directly out of the exegeses.

Tom Long breaks theme sentences into two distinct parts, “focus” and “function”. For Long, “what the sermon aims to say can be called its “focus”, and what the sermon aims to do can be called its “function”.”⁶⁰ In other words, “Focus” is what the sermon is all about and “function” is the desired transformation of the sermon.

Henry Mitchell writes about a “behavioral purpose” in *Celebration & Experience in Preaching*. His purpose statement aims at the listeners actively experiencing the

⁵⁸ Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* 118.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁰ Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* 2nd Edition ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 108.

gospel.⁶¹ To Mitchell, the sermon's purpose is to facilitate an encounter where the listeners experience the grace of God through the gospel of Jesus.

Paul Scott Wilson uses a biblical/theological source for his theme statement. He offers a method of design with four distinct moves: What is the trouble in the text? What is the trouble in the today's world? What is the grace in the text? What is the grace in today's world?⁶² Similarly, Milton Crum,⁶³ in his 1977 *Manual on Preaching*, proposed a movement of the sermon through a structure that Wilson calls "from trouble to grace."⁶⁴ He offers the "situation, complication, resolution" framework.

Frank Thomas builds on the work of Crum, Wilson, and Mitchell with his preaching worksheet, laid out in *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God*.⁶⁵ I have found this particular worksheet model to be one of the most practical and beneficial foundations for this particular element of sermon structure. This model blends the "trouble and grace" model from Wilson; the "situation, complication, and resolution" framework from Crum; and the "experiential preaching" contribution from Mitchell. All together, you have a sermonic design model that facilitates transformational, celebrative preaching of the gospel. The worksheet's six questions are offered to provide preachers a sermonic strategy and design:

⁶¹ Henry H. Mitchell, *Celebration & Experience in Preaching* Revised ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 13.

⁶² Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 16-17.

⁶³ Milton Crum, *Manual on Preaching: A New Process of Sermon Development* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1977), 32.

⁶⁴ Paul Scott Wilson, *Preaching & Homiletical Theory*, Preaching and Its Partners (Atlanta, GA: Chalice Press, 2004), 87.

⁶⁵ Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God*, loc. 1587.

- 1) What does this passage say to me?
- 2) What does this passage say to the needs of the people in our time?
- 3) What is the “bad news” in the text? What is the “bad news” for our time?
- 4) What is the “good news” in the text? What is the “good news” for our time?
- 5) Behavioral purpose statement: I propose ____ to the end ____.
- 6) Strategy for celebration: (a) What shall we celebrate? (b) How shall we celebrate our response to 6a, and what materials of celebration shall we use?⁶⁶

For this project, I will attempt to modify question 5, by replacing the behavioral purpose statement with an attitudinal purpose statement. The attitudinal purpose statement is a “function” theme statement as defined by Long.⁶⁷ The attitudinal purpose statement names the desired change or transformation of the sermon. It states the hoped-for impact in the heart of the listeners. I anticipate that my research will uncover principles either rhetorical or strategic that will improve sermonic designs.

A particular importance of the attitudinal purpose statement is that it points to God. According to Chapell, God-centered sermons demonstrate “the reality of the human predicament that requires divine solution.”⁶⁸ Similarly, Wilson points to grammar of preaching, saying, “Unless the theme sentence itself focuses on God, God is not likely to have a significant focus in the sermon.”⁶⁹ Sermons that have theme sentences that are God-conscious (focused) will facilitate “grace” encounters. The focus should be on God’s active grace toward humanity and not humanity’s actions toward God.

Therefore, the attitudinal purpose statement should have God at the center. Unless God is the center, there is no gospel (good news). If an attitudinal purpose

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Long, *The Witness of Preaching* 108.

⁶⁸ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 296.

⁶⁹ Wilson, *Preaching & Homiletical Theory*, 95.

statement is self-centered, it will not lead to the heart change that we are ultimately seeking. Unless the focus of the attitudinal purpose statement is on God's action, the gospel in the sermon will be lost.

Preaching in a Postmodern Culture

The world today has changed in many ways. According to David Lose, “The postmodern emphasis on knowledge as governed by perspective and power accounts for the shift from epistemology (the science of knowing) to hermeneutics (the study of interpretation).”⁷⁰ Apart from essentials to guarantee the validity of knowledge, interpretation is all that is left. For the postmodern person, reality is spoken of in terms of multilayered texts. Thus, truth and knowledge are constrained by interpretation, which “reigns supreme.”⁷¹ According to Lose, “to some postmodernists, the very notion of ‘truth’ is entirely suspect.”⁷² So truth is questioned, which leads to the position that reality cannot be described. As a result, the concept of meaning is also weakened.

The postmodern person says that truth is understood in the context of one's culture and personal experience. In turn, these influences then dictate how the world is to be interpreted. In other words, there is no reality, only interpretation. In the postmodern view, there is no absolute truth; thus, truth and reality are relative. This view also suggests that only your feelings can be regarded as true—and only to you. Everyone has his or her own truth.

⁷⁰ David J. Lose, *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 24.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 27.

According to Keller, “Even the most outwardly focused, evangelistic churches continue to reach mainly people with traditional mind-sets because their communication expects hearers to carry that historical imprint of Christendom. Yet fewer and fewer find the messages comprehensible, much less persuasive.”⁷³ According to James K. A. Smith, “Postmodern believers can’t shield themselves from competing stories that call into question the fundamental Story of faith. Evolutionary psychology and expressive individualism are in the water of our secular age.”⁷⁴ Additionally Smith argues, “What should interest us are these fugitive expressions of doubt and longing, faith and questioning. These lived expressions of ‘cross-pressure’ are at the heart of the secular.”⁷⁵ Understanding the critical importance between the secular mind and the universal expressions of doubt and the longing for meaning, purpose, satisfaction, and identity, is essential for preachers within the secular age. Consideration of these tensions in sermonic design would likely yield benefits in preaching in a postmodern culture.

The key to preaching to a culture, according to Keller, is to identify its baseline cultural narratives.⁷⁶ The postmodern culture is not absent belief, but is simply placing its belief in other things. Keller offers six practices for consideration for preaching and reaching this culture. He suggests:

1. Use well-accessible or well-explained vocabulary
2. Employ respected authorities to strengthen the theses
3. Demonstrate understanding of doubts and objections
4. Affirm in order to challenge baseline cultural narratives
5. Make gospel offers that push on the culture’s pressure points

⁷³ Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, 1092.

⁷⁴ Smith, *Now (Not) to Be Secular*, 12.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁶ Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, 1494-1495.

6. Get down to the heart level and call for gospel motivation⁷⁷

It is my expectation that literature on preaching and teaching, with a special emphasis on application; on legalistic preaching in the Church; on theme sentences and structure, with a focus on purpose statements; and on preaching in a postmodern culture will assist in developing sermons that impact the transformation of the human heart.

In this chapter I provided a description of works previously published that are relevant and important to the research question I am exploring. I demonstrated how my thesis is unique and how it will advance the practice of preaching. I have explored the history and theology behind sermonic theme statements and purpose statements. This journey has led me to consider the tension between purpose statements that unintentionally focus on application as behavioral (conduct) and how they contrast with sermons that focus on application as attitudinal (heart). The next chapter focuses on my research and methodology. In that chapter I will describe the project design in detail and identify the project's goals. I will discuss the context of my research, the research methods and tools that will be employed in the investigation, and the rationale for using them.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 1219-1413.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH & METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will describe the project design in detail and name its goals. I will discuss the context of my research, the research methods and tools that were employed in the investigation, and the rationale for using them. I will also discuss in some detail the research subjects and how the tools will be used with them. Finally, I will discuss the limits of my research project.

The purpose of this thesis project was to investigate the change in the listener's thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and perceptions due to a sermon deliberately designed for attitudinal application of the gospel. In coming chapters, I will assess whether an intentional focus on attitudinal application in the sermonic design can impact heart transformation. My hope for this design was that it could produce preaching that speaks effectively to the heart, which will ultimately impact behavior (conduct). To accomplish this, I modified Frank A. Thomas's preaching worksheet, by replacing the "behavior purpose statement" with an "attitudinal purpose statement."⁷⁸ By exploring this deliberate approach in the sermonic structure, I hoped to provide a principle that would assist in sermon planning and anticipate that it will provide guidance in effecting the desired change in the life of the listeners.

In order to investigate this question, I used a mixed method, action-reflection model. Using mixed methods allowed me to pull from the strengths of various methods and to minimize the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative tools.

⁷⁸ Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God*, loc. 1584.

It was also anticipated that conducting a mixed methods research design within an action research framework would help to expedite the evaluation of the research questions in a timely fashion. This could be achieved because a mixed method offers an outcome-based method of evaluation that, when partnered with action-reflection, aids in the achievement of project goals.

I preached two sermons, in two different churches, using the preaching worksheet, modified to include the intentional attitudinal application statement. The first church was Crosspointe Meadows Church in Novi, MI. The second church was Overcomers Evangel Church, in Detroit, MI.

Novi, the location of Crosspointe Meadows Church, is one of the fastest growing cities in Michigan. Novi is a predominately middle-class community with a reputation for having great schools. Crosspointe itself is a predominately Caucasian, multigenerational congregation of approximately 200 attendees on an average Sunday morning. The church's neighborhood includes a wide range of levels of housing—from \$400,000 houses that are right across the street, to nearby senior housing located, townhomes, and a trailer-park (manufactured homes) community. The median household income in Novi in 2013 was \$82,072 compared with \$48,273 in Michigan overall.⁷⁹ The racial makeup of Novi the same year was 70.8% White, 19.2% Asian, 6% Black, 2.4% Two or more races, 2.2% Hispanic, 0.06% Other race, and 0.04% American Indian.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ The City of Novi, "Novi City Data," <http://www.city-data.com/city/Novi-Michigan.html> (accessed November 15, 2015).

⁸⁰ Ibid.

On the other hand, Overcomers Evangel Church is a smaller congregation located in the heart of the “Motor City,” Detroit, Michigan. This 50-member congregation is predominately African-American and borders a blue-collar neighborhood and one of the major highways in the city. The average listing price for Detroit homes for sale on Trulia was \$35,454 for the week ending Jan 27, 2016.⁸¹ The median household income in 2013 was \$24,820 in Detroit compared with \$48,273 in Michigan overall.⁸² The racial makeup of Detroit in 2013 was 80.1% Black, 8.9% White, 7.7% Hispanic, 1.5% Two or more races, 1.3% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian.⁸³ The congregation is multigenerational, but its attendance is slightly skewed toward an older generation on an average Sunday morning.

I administered and collected data from 73 total pre-sermon respondents and 48 postsermon survey respondents across both churches. Specifically, there were 48 pre-sermon respondents from Crosspointe Meadows and 25 from Overcomers Evangel. To measure change, there were two cross-sectional surveys administered: a pre-sermon survey and a postsermon survey. The first 14 questions were the same for both surveys, in an attempt to measure general attitudinal changes from before the sermon until after the sermon. This part of the survey used questions from the Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMRS) short form’s self-report survey and

⁸¹ Trulia, “Housing Data,” http://www.trulia.com/real_estate/Detroit-Michigan/community-info/ (accessed February 8th, 2016).

⁸² The City of Detroit, “Detroit City Data,” <http://www.city-data.com/city/Detroit-Michigan.html> (accessed February 8th, 2016).

⁸³ Ibid.

utilized Likert-scale formats.⁸⁴ The BMMRS short form was selected due to its scale's proven ability to assess attitudinal change. At both congregations, after the administration of the surveys, there were follow-up interviews with respondents at a later date to explore more deeply their decisions and responses.

In each context, the pre-sermon survey was handed out as people were entering the sanctuary before the first sermon of the series. They were completed prior to the delivery of the first sermon. The postsermon survey was handed out before each second sermon, with instructions for participants to complete it after listening to the second sermon. The surveys themselves were anonymous, but each participant was assigned a unique number, marked on their surveys, which allowed me to identify and match pre-sermon surveys with postsermon surveys.

In the postsermon survey, I attempted to identify attitudinal changes as a direct result of the sermon through the addition of 14 additional questions. These additional questions sought to provide a direct linkage to the sermon just experienced and to identify whether there was a measurable impact from the attitudinal focus.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with a subset of respondents. After analyzing the preliminary survey data, I randomly selected five individuals from each congregation for the interviews. The objective of the interviews was to allow detailed exploration of each single respondent's responses and to gain further specificity in regards to whether the sermon produced an attitudinal impact on its hearers. I asked the

⁸⁴ The Fetzer Institute, "Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality for Use in Health Research," <http://fetzer.org/resources/multidimensional-measurement-religiousnessspirituality-use-health-research> (accessed October 14, 2015).

respondents to elaborate and provide insight into why they responded as they did to selected survey questions.

Sample sermon specific survey questions included the following:

- Do sermons that you hear change how you think about suffering?
1 - A great deal, 2 - Quite a bit, 3 - Somewhat, 4 - Not at all.
If so, please explain.
- Do sermons that you hear preached change how you feel about God's activity in this world?
1 - A great deal, 2 - Quite a bit, 3 - Somewhat, 4 - Not at all.
If so, please explain how.
- Have sermons motivated you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?
1 - A great deal, 2 - Quite a bit, 3 - Somewhat, 4 - Not at all.
If so, please explain?

The full survey instruments can be found in appendix A.

I planned to conduct a simple analysis on the data to see if there was any difference after hearing the sermons. By checking for the presence of differences between the baseline and follow-up responses, I hoped to determine with a reasonable amount of certainty whether there was a change in how participants thought, saw, and believed as a result of experiencing the sermon and whether the deliberate focus on attitudinal change (the heart) as defined was successful.

From a confidentiality perspective, the paper surveys have been locked in a file cabinet and the survey results secured on a password-protected computer. In regards to

ethics, all participants were told that they were participating in research and all willingly participated in this research project.

In most research projects, including this one, there are limitations. One limitation of the project was in the survey design. There was a risk that the design of the survey might not detect measurable differentials in outcomes. Though I expected the design of my tools to produce results, measuring heart change in people is very difficult. I expected that the deliberate combination of survey tools with interviews would help address this potential limitation.

A second limitation in the design was the risk of not being able to collect sufficient information. This was a volunteer survey. I was not able to control who and how many people completed the survey. Although I attempted to account for this limitation in my project, there was still a real chance of insufficient data collection.

A third limitation within the research project was the fact that I was preaching and conducting research within congregations that I was not pastoring. Although I had just planted ONE Community Church, the timing of my research necessitated that I conduct the research project in other congregations. Limitations included the possibility of low cooperation from the subject congregations, due to my not being their pastor and not having “skin” in the game.

Although these limitations were legitimate, I attempted to account for and address these limitations to the best of my ability. I believed that the project design, with the combination of the surveys and in-depth interviews, would detect measurable differentials in outcomes.

In this chapter, I described the research project design in detail and named the project goals. I discussed the context of my research, the research method(s) and tools that were employed in the investigation, and the rationale for using them. This chapter also discussed in some detail the research subjects and how the tools were to be used with them. In the next chapter, I intend to report the data, analyze the data, interpret the data, and connect the result to the project goals stated in chapter four.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH RESULTS ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will be: a) reporting the data; b) analyzing the data; c) interpreting the data; and d) connecting the results and interpretation to the project goals stated in chapter four. This research is intended to evaluate the impact of sermons prepared using the attitudinal purpose statement within the preaching worksheet (appendix L and appendix M) on listener's perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs. The attitudinal purpose statement used for the two sermons preached from John 4 was:

Purpose Statement: That the hearers will see, think, and believe further that Jesus is the one who can fill every thirst, hunger, void that is in the human heart.

The first sermon (part 1) was centered on verses 3-18 of John chapter 4. The second sermon (part 2) was centered on verses 39-42 of John chapter 4. The sermon text for part 1 of the series can be found in appendix N, and the text of the second sermon is found appendix O.

Summary of Combined-Location Overall Results

The pre-sermon and postsermon surveys were administered at two separate locations. The first location was Crosspointe Meadows Church in Novi, Michigan, or "Novi" for short. The second location was Overcomers Evangel Church in Detroit, Michigan, or "Detroit" for short. The combined survey results for both locations were comprised of 121 total completed surveys, which included both pre-sermon and postsermon surveys. The total pre-sermon surveys across both locations were 73. The total postsermon surveys completed across both locations were 48. After the surveys were administered and collected, there were also 14 total interviews conducted to collect

additional data.

Combined-Location Pre-Sermon Survey Results

The combined-location pre-sermon survey results for questions 1 through 14 can be found in appendix C. Of the 73 total pre-sermon surveys taken across both locations, 25 (34.25%) were from the Detroit location and 48 (65.75%) were from the Novi location.

For Q1, “I find strength and comfort in my faith,” out of the 73 total respondents, 49.32% (n=36) responded, “Many times a day”; 27.4% (n=20) responded, “Every day”; 17.81% (n=13) responded, “Most Days”; and 5.48% (n=4) responded, “Some days.”

For Q2, “I feel God’s love for me, directly or through others,” out of the 73 total respondents, 38.36% (n=28) responded, “Many times a day”; 32.88% (n=24) responded, “Every day”; 17.81% (n=13) responded, “Most Days”; 9.59% (n=7) responded, “Some days”; and 1.37% (n=1) responded, “Once in a while.”

For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in union with God,” out of the 73 total respondents, 40.28% (n=29) responded, “Many times a day”; 43.06% (n=31) responded, “Every day”; 12.50% (n=13) responded, “Most Days”; 4.17% (n=3) responded, “Some days”; and 1.37% (n=1) did not respond to this question. While it could be assumed that most Christians would desire to be in closer union with God on a daily basis or more, the data indicates that about 13% desire to be closer or in union with God “Most days” and 4% only “Some days”.

For Q4, “I believe in a God who watches over me,” out of the 73 total respondents, 90.41% (n=66) responded, “Strongly agree”; and 9.59% (n=7) responded “Agree.” Thus, the majority of those surveyed strongly agree with the belief that God

watches over us.

For Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in this world,” out of the 73 total respondents, 41.67% (n=30) responded, “Strongly Agree”; 52.78% (n=38) responded “Agree”; and 5.56% (n=4) responded “Disagree.” One respondent did not reply to this question. Though 94% “Strongly agree” or “Agree,” it was notable to find that 6% of responses (4 of 72 respondents) disagree with this question.

For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong,” out of the 73 total respondents, 43.84% (n=32) responded, “Always or almost always”; 46.58% (n=34) responded, “Often”; and 9.59% (n=7) responded, “Seldom.” There is no surprise that about 90% of the respondents indicated that they often, always, or almost always forgive themselves. However, it was notable to find that almost 10% of the respondents seldom forgive themselves.

For Q7, “I have forgiven those who hurt me,” out of the 73 total respondents, 50.68% (n=37) responded, “Always or almost always”; 43.84% (n=32) responded “Often”; and 5.48% (n=4) responded, “Seldom.” There is no surprise that about 95% of the respondents said that they often, always, or almost always forgive others. However, it was notable to find that almost 5% of the respondents seldom forgive others.

For Q8, “I know that God forgives me,” out of the 73 total respondents, 84.93% (n=62) responded, “Always or almost always,” and 15.07% (n=11) responded, “Often.” I would have expected that 100% of the respondents would believe that God always or almost always forgives them. However, it was notable to find that 15% of the respondents believe that he “Often” does instead of “Always or almost always.”

For Q9, “I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force,” out of the 73 total respondents, 53.42% (n=39) responded, “A great deal”; 27.40% (n=20) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 19.18% (n=14) responded, “Somewhat.” Though approximately 81% of the respondents stated that they mostly believe themselves to be part of a larger spiritual force, it was notable and a bit surprising that a full 19% only “Somewhat” think they are part of a larger spiritual force.

For Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance,” out of the 73 total respondents, 64.38% (n=47) responded, “A great deal”; 31.51% (n=23) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 4.11% (n=3) responded, “Somewhat.” It was notable that 4% responded that they only “Somewhat” look to God for strength, support, and guidance.

For Q11, “I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life,” out of the 73 total respondents, 67.12% (n=49) responded, “Strongly agree”; 31.51% (n=23) responded, “Agree”; and 1.37% (n=1) responded, “Disagree.” The sole “Disagree” response was notable, as it would be expected that since the surveys were conducted at Christian churches, every respondent would try hard to carry their religious beliefs over into all other dealings in their life.

Q12 asked, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you?” Out of the 73 total respondents, 21.92% (n=16) responded, “Many times a day”; 17.81% (n=13) responded, “Every day”; 30.14% (n=22) responded, “Most days”; 26.03% (n=19) responded, “Some days”; 2.74% (n=2) responded, “Once in a while”; and 1.37% (n=1) responded, “Never or almost never.” While almost 40% of the respondents indicated that the sermon produced a daily impact on how they saw the world and people around them, it was notable that 59% responded

that the sermon had an impact on their perception only “Most days,” “Some days,” or “Once in a while.” Even more notably, approximately 1% indicated “Never or almost never.”

Q13 asked, “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?” Out of the 73 total respondents, 27.40% (n=20) responded, “Very religious”; 53.42% (n=39) responded, “Moderately religious”; 9.59% (n=7) responded, “Slightly religious”; and finally 9.59% (n=7) responded, “Not at all religious.” This distribution of response seems logical as over half of the responses indicated “Moderately religious,” which could be simply an honest self-assessment of where people (Christians) see themselves. The 7 people that responded “Not at all religious” is somewhat surprising. One would think that attending church would make them at least identify as “Slightly religious”. Follow-up questions could explore whether or not these respondents have a negative view of the term “religious” or some other reason.

Q14 asked, “To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?” Out of the 73 total respondents, 49.32% (n=36) responded, “Very spiritual”; 39.73% (n=29) responded, “Moderately spiritual”; 10.96% (n=8) responded, “Slightly spiritual”; and finally zero responded “Not spiritual at all.” Overall, compared to the previous question, people see themselves as more spiritual than religious.

Combined-Location Postsermon Survey Results

Appendix D displays the details of the postsermon survey results for both locations. Of the 48 total postsermon surveys taken across both locations, 17 (35.42%) were from the Detroit location, and 31 (64.58%) were from the Novi location. As illustrated by question 28, the last question in the survey, the gender breakdown for the

combined respondent group was 43.75% female (n=21) and 56.25% male (n=27). Not everyone who took the pre-sermon survey attended the second sermon to take the postsermon survey. Additionally, not everyone who was there to take the postsermon survey attended the first sermon to complete the pre-sermon survey. There were 15 respondents at the Detroit location who took both the pre-sermon and postsermon surveys and there were 26 respondents at the Novi location that took both surveys. Below is a report and analysis of the data collected for the 28 questions of the postsermon survey, across both locations, less question 26 (the verbatim question), which will be reported and analyzed later in this paper.

For Q1, "I find strength and comfort in my faith," 48 total people responded. Of these, 58.33% (n=28) responded, "Many times a day"; 10.42% (n=5) responded, "Every day"; 20.83% (n=10) responded, "Most days"; and 10.42% (n=5) responded, "Some days."

For Q2, "I feel God's love for me, directly or through others," 48 total people responded. Of these, 43.75% (n=21) responded, "Many times a day"; 31.25% (n=15) responded, "Every day"; 12.50% (n=6) responded, "Most Days"; 8.33% (n=4) responded, "Some days"; and 4.17% (n=2) responded, "Once in a while."

For Q3, "I desire to be closer to or in union with God," 48 total people responded. Of these, 43.75% (n=21) responded, "Many times a day"; 37.50% (n=18) responded, "Every day"; 14.58% (n=7) responded, "Most Days"; and 4.17% (n=2) responded, "Some days." While I would expect that most, if not all, people surveyed in these two congregations would desire to be closer or in union with God, it was notable to find that 4.17% of the respondents only desire to be closer "Some days" instead of

“Most days” or “Every day.”

For Q4, “I believe in a God who watches over me,” 48 total people responded. Of these, 89.58% (n=43) responded, “Strongly agree,” and 10.42% (n=5) responded, “Agree.” There is no surprise that 100% of the respondents either “Strongly agree” or “Agree” with this question.

For Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world,” 48 total people responded. Of these, 58.33% (n=28) responded with “Strongly agree”; 37.50% (n=18) responded, “Agree”; and 4.17% (n=2) stated, “Disagree.” While most surveyed in these two congregations feel a sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world, it was notable to find that 4.17% of the respondents disagree with this statement. This could be due to how these respondents interpret Christian call and responsibility as apposed to the ones who “Strongly agree” and “Agree”.

For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong,” 48 total people responded. Of these, 45.83% (n=22) responded with “Always or almost always”; 43.75% (n=21) responded, “Often”; 8.33% (n=4) stated, “Seldom”; and 2.08% (n=1) responded, “Never.” Forgiveness of self is foundational to the Christian faith. While about 90% of the respondents stated that they forgive themselves frequently, about 10% “Seldom” or “Never” forgive themselves for the things they’ve done wrong.

For Q7, “I have forgiven those who hurt me,” 47 total people responded (one person did not answer this question). Of these, 40.43% (n=19) responded with “Always or almost always”; 53.19% (n=25) responded, “Often”; and 6.38% (n=3) stated, “Seldom.” Forgiveness of others is foundational to the Christian faith. While about 94%

of the respondents stated that they “Always,” “Almost always,” or “Often” forgive those who hurt them, about 6% “Seldom” forgive those who hurt them.

For Q8, “I know that God forgives me,” 47 total people responded (one respondent did not answer this question); 80.85% (n=38) responded with “Always or almost always”; 17.02% (n=8) responded, “Often”; and 2.13% (n=1) stated, “Seldom.” Knowing that God forgives us is also foundational to the Christian faith. While an overwhelming 98% of the respondents stated that they “Always,” “Almost always,” or “Often” know that God forgives them, surprisingly, 2% responded that they “Seldom” know that God forgives them.

For Q9, “I think about how my life is a part of a larger spiritual force,” 47 total people responded (one person did not answer this question). Of these, 38.30% (n=18) responded with “A great deal”; 40.43% (n=19) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 2.13% (n=10) stated, “Somewhat.” While most of the respondents (79%) think about how their life is a part of a larger spiritual force at least “Quite a bit,” notably 21% of those surveyed in a Christian church indicated that they “Somewhat” think about this.

For Q10, “I look to God for strength support and guidance,” 47 total people responded (one person did not answer this question); 70.21% (n=33) responded with “A great deal”; 21.28% (n=10) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 8.51% (n=4) stated, “Somewhat.” While most of the respondents (91%) look to God for strength, support, and guidance, at least “Quite a bit,” notably 9% only of those surveyed in a Christian church setting “Somewhat” look to God for strength, support, and guidance.

For Q11, “I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into my other dealings in life,” 47 total people responded (one person did not answer this question). Of these,

65.96% (n=31) responded, “Strongly agree”; 31.91% (n=15) responded with “Agree”; and 2.13% (n=1) responded with Disagree.” While an overwhelming 98% of the respondents stated that they “Strongly agree” or “Agree” with this statement, it was notable that 2% of those surveyed in a Christian church setting indicated that they “Disagree”.

Q12 asked, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you?” For this question, 47 total people responded (one person did not answer this question); 19.15% (n=9) responded with “Many times a day”; 21.28% (n=10) responded, “Every day”; 38.30% (n=18) stated, “Most days”; 17.02% (n=8) responded, “Some days”; and 4.26% (n=2) responded, “Once in a while.”

Q13 asked, “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?” There were 47 total responses (one person did not answer this question). There was a bell curve distribution with 21.28% (n=10) responding with “Very religious”; 57.45% (n=27) responding, “Moderately religious”; 12.77% (n=6) responding, “Slightly religious”; and 8.51% (n=4) responding, “Not religious at all”.

Q14 asked, “To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?” Total responses to this question numbered 48. Of these, 41.67% (n=20) responded with “Very spiritual”; 50.00% (n=24) responded, “Moderately spiritual”; and 8.33% (n=6) responded, “Slightly spiritual”.

Q15 asked, “Do sermons that you hear, change how you think about trouble/suffering?” There were 48 total responses, and 50.00% (n=24) responded with “A great deal”; 37.50% (n=18) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 12.50% (n=6) responded, “Somewhat.”

Q16 asked, “Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny change how you think about trouble/suffering?” There were 47 total responses (one person did not answer this question); 38.30% (n=18) responded with “A great deal”; 40.43% (n=19) responded with “Quite a bit”; and 21.28% (n=10) responded, “Somewhat.”

Q17 asked, “Do sermons that you hear preached, change how you feel about God’s activity in this world?” There were 48 total responses to this question; 37.50% (n=18) responded with “A great deal”; 45.83% (n=22) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 16.67% (n=8) responded, “Somewhat.”

Q18 asked, “Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny, change how you feel about God’s activity in the world?” There were 46 total responses (two people did not answer this question). Of these, 43.48% (n=20) responded with “A great deal”; 39.13% (n=18) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 17.39% (n=8) responded, “Somewhat.”

Q19 asked, “Have sermons motivated you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?” There were 48 total responses to this question. Of these, 50.00% (n=24) responded with “A great deal”; 45.83% (n=22) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 4.17% (n=2) responded, “Somewhat”.

Q20 asked, “Did these two sermons motivate you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?” There were 45 total responses (three people did not answer this question). Of these, 35.56% (n=16) responded with “A great deal”; 46.67% (n=21) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 17.78% (n=8) responded, “Somewhat.” Thus, 82% of the respondents felt at least “Quite a bit” that, through the two sermons preached, they were motivated to change their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Motivation to change as a result of the sermons could be interpreted as experiencing heart transformation.

For Q21, “Through the sermon God reminded you of His active grace,” 47 total people responded (one person did not answer this question). Of these, 57.45% (n=27) responded with “A great deal”; 36.17% (n=17) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 6.38% (n=3) responded, “Somewhat.” Thus, 94% of the respondents felt at least “Quite a bit” that, through the two sermons preached, God reminded them of His active grace. This reminding or recalling of God’s grace through the sermons could be interpreted as experiencing heart transformation.

For Q22, “Through these sermons God created, or strengthened, the hope that God is actively at work in our lives every day,” 46 total people responded (two people did not answer this question). Of these, 58.70% (n=27) responded with “A great deal”; 32.61% (n=15) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 8.70% (n=4) responded, “Somewhat.” Thus, 91% of the respondents felt at least “Quite a bit” that through the two sermons preached, God strengthened or created the hope that He is active and at work in their daily lives. This strengthening or creation of hope in God as a result of the sermons could be interpreted as experiencing heart transformation.

For Q23, “The sermons suggested specific ways to look for and see God's work in our world and even in our struggles,” 46 total people responded (two people did not answer this question). Of these, 52.17% (n=24) responded with “A great deal”; 34.78% (n=19) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 13.04% (n=6) responded, “Somewhat.” Thus, 87% of the respondents felt at least “Quite a bit” that the two sermons suggested specific ways to look for God’s work in our world, even in our struggles. This increased awareness of God’s presence as a result the sermons could be interpreted as experiencing heart transformation.

Q24 asked, “To what extent did these sermons increase your understanding of dealing with stressful situations in any way?” There were 46 total responses (two people did not answer this question). Of these, 39.13% (n=18) responded with, “A great deal”; 41.30% (n=19) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 19.57% (n=9) responded, “Somewhat.” Therefore, 79% of the respondents felt that the sermon series increased their understanding of dealing with stressful situations either “A great deal” or “Quite a bit.” This increased understating of dealing with stressful situations as a result of the sermons could be interpreted as experiencing heart transformation.

For Q25, “These sermons communicated God’s grace in a way that affected your attitude (heart) toward Him,” 46 total people responded (two people did not answer this question). Of these, 58.70% (n=27) responded with “A great deal”; 32.61% (n=15) responded, “Quite a bit”; and 8.7% (n=4) responded, “Somewhat.” The data suggests that approximately 81% of those surveyed felt their attitude (heart) toward God was affected due to the sermons preached. This could be interpreted as experiencing heart transformation.

Q27 asked, “What is your age?” There were 48 total responses to this question. Overall, there was a pretty even age distribution. Of the respondents, 8.33% (n=4) were between 18-24 years old, 18.75% (n=9) were between 25-34 years old, 10.42% (n=5) were between 35-44 years old, 14.58% (n=7) were between 45-54 years old, 12.50% (n=6) were between 55-64 years old, 18.75% (n=9) were between 65-74 years old, and 16.67% (n=8) were 75 years old or older.

Q28 asked, “What is your gender?” There were 48 total responses to this question. Of these, 43.75% (n=21) were male and 56.25% (n=27) were female.

Comparison of Results from the First 14 Questions

I would like to now report data that would assess whether or not there was a change in responses in questions 1 through 14 across the two sermons preached. I will report data only from respondents in whom changes were experienced between the two sermons. For the Detroit location (appendix E), there were 15 total couplets, respondents who completed both the pre-sermon survey and the postsermon surveys. At the Novi location, there were 25 total couplets. For the Detroit location, one respondent (respondent #2), or 6% of the couplets, did not have any change in responses. For the Novi location, two respondents (respondents #14 and #36), or about 8% of the couplets, did not have any changes across the pre-sermon and postsermon surveys.

Detroit Location

The results for the comparison of questions 1 through 14 for the Detroit location can be found in appendix E. At the Detroit location, excluding respondent #2, there were 14 respondents with changes after the two sermons were experienced. For this analysis, unless otherwise noted, a positive change is the next response “up” the scale on the postsermon survey when compared with the pre-sermon survey initial response. A negative response change is the next response “down” the scale on the postsermon survey when compared with the pre-sermon survey initial response. A double positive or negative change would have a response movement two places “up” or “down” respectively. If the respondent had more positive changes than negative changes, it was concluded that the sermons had a positive influence on the respondent’s thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions.

These questions are identified as questions 1 through questions 14, displayed in

appendix A for both the pre-sermon and postsermon surveys. These questions enabled the assessment of whether or not the sermonic events had an impact on the respondents across time. As seen in appendix E for the Detroit location, 57% (8 of 14 Detroit respondents) had a majority of positive changes in the 14 questions, comparing the pre-sermon survey to the postsermon survey. Approximately 29% (4 out of 14) had a majority of negative changes in the 14 questions compared; 14% (2 of 14) were equally positive and negative. Therefore, the majority of the respondents from the Detroit location experienced a positive change in their attitude, perception, and beliefs after hearing the two sermons preached. These subjects experienced transformation of the heart and the project goals were achieved at this location.

Novi Location

At the Novi location (appendix F), excluding respondents 14 and 36 due to no changes across the two surveys, there were 23 respondents with changes. For this analysis, unless otherwise noted, a positive change is the next response “up” the scale on the postsermon survey when compared with the pre-sermon survey initial response. A negative response change is the next response “down” the scale on the postsermon survey when compared to the pre-sermon survey initial response. A double positive or negative change would have a response movement two places “up” or “down” respectively. Therefore, if the respondent had more positive changes than negative changes, it was concluded that the sermons had a positive influence on the respondent’s thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions.

In summary (appendix F), 43% of the Novi respondents (10 of 23) had positive changes in the 14 questions compared from the pre-sermon survey to the postsermon

survey. While 43% (10 out of 23) experienced negative changes in the 14 questions, when the pre-sermon survey was compared with the postsermon survey; 13%, or 3 of 23 Novi respondents responded neutrally. This suggests that there was an even split in the subjects who experienced either a positive or negative change in their attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs after hearing the two sermons preached. Thus, it can be concluded from this analysis, that there was an overall neutral impact/change as a result of hearing the sermons in the Novi church and thus a neutral impact on achieving the project goals.

Sermon-Specific Comparison Question Results

The questions provided in the second half of the postsermon survey addressed the impact of the sermon directly. These questions are identified as questions 15–20 across both locations, and the total results are displayed in appendix G. These questions specifically addressed and assessed, across several measurable variables, whether or not the respondents perceived there to be any difference between my sermons and the sermons that they hear preached in general. The outcome of the results from the combined churches is described below.

Question 15 and Question 16—Combined Locations

When Q15 in appendix G (“Do sermons that you hear, change how you think about trouble/suffering?”) is compared with Q16 (“Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny change how you think about trouble/suffering?”), we find that in both locations, the general sermons have a greater impact (change) on how the respondents think about trouble/suffering than the two sermons I preached. For example, 50%

responded that sermons in general have “A great deal” of impact on how they think about trouble/suffering, but only 38.3% thought the same of the sermons I preached.

Question 17 and Question 18—Combined Locations

When Q17 and Q18 in appendix G are compared, we find that a greater percentage of the respondents indicated that sermons I preached (43.48%) changed how they feel about God’s activity in this world “A great deal” versus sermons they hear in general (37.5%).

Question 19 and Question 20—Combined Locations

When Q19 and Q20 in appendix G are compared, we find a greater percentage of the respondents (50%) indicated that the sermons they hear preached in general motivated them “A great deal” to change their thoughts, feelings, or actions. By comparison, for the two sermons they heard me preach, a smaller percentage answered the same (35.56%). Additionally, a greater percentage of respondents indicated that the sermons I preached “Somewhat” (46.67%) motivated them to change their thoughts, feelings, and actions, whereas those answering the same for sermons heard in general was much lower (4.17%).

Question 15 and Question 16—Detroit Location

For the Detroit location, the sermon-specific results can be found in appendix H. When Q15 (“Do sermons that you hear, change how you think about trouble/suffering?”) is compared with Q16 (“Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny change how you think about trouble/suffering?”), we find general sermons have a greater overall impact (change) on how the respondents think about trouble/suffering

versus the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny. For example, 100% responded that sermons in general have “A great deal” and “Quite a bit” of impact on how they think about trouble/suffering versus approximately 88% of those who heard my sermons.

Question 17 and Question 18—Detroit Location

For the Detroit location, when Q17 and Q18 are compared (appendix H), we find a greater percentage of the respondents indicated that my sermons (82.35%) changed how they feel about God’s activity in this world “A great deal” versus sermons they hear in general (64.71%).

Question 19 and Question 20—Detroit Location

For the Detroit location, when Q19 and Q20 are compared (appendix H), we find a greater percentage of the respondents indicated that the sermons that they hear preached in general motivate them to change their thoughts, feelings, or actions versus the two sermons they heard me preach.

Question 15 and Question 16—Novi Location

For the Novi location, when Q15 (“Do sermons that you hear, change how you think about trouble/suffering?”) is compared (appendix I) with Q16 (“Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny change how you think about trouble/suffering?”), the general sermons had a greater impact (change) on how the respondents think about trouble/suffering than the two sermons I preached.

Question 17 and Question 18—Novi Location

For the Novi location, when Q17 and Q18 are compared (appendix I), a greater percentage of the respondents indicated “A great deal” and “Quite a bit” (80%) in

regards to how sermons I preached changed how they felt about God’s activity in this world; a slightly smaller percentage answered the same about sermons they hear in general (77.42%).

Question 19 and Question 20—Novi Location

For the Novi location, when Q19 and Q20 are compared (appendix I), the percentage of those who indicated that the general sermons they hear preached motivate them to change their thoughts, feelings, or actions was greater than the percentage who felt the same about my two sermons.

In summary, the sermon-specific, combined-location results indicated that the general sermons heard by respondents changed how they thought about trouble/suffering more than the sermons I preached. The data also suggest that the general sermons motivated the respondents to change their thoughts, feelings, or actions more than the sermons I preached did. On the other hand, the data indicate that the sermons I preached changed how the respondents felt about God's activity in this world more than did the general sermons heard by the respondents. These findings suggest that the sermons I preached impacted the respondents’ heart transformation specifically in the area of how respondents felt about God’s activity in this world.

Sermon-Specific Postsurvey Questions for Detroit

The sermon-specific questions (21–25) from the postsermon survey for the Detroit location can be found in appendix H. These questions were addressed specifically to the two sermons I preached. The five questions were:

- Question 21: Did these sermons motivate you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?

- Question 22: Through the sermon God reminded you of His active grace.
- Question 23: Through these sermons God created, or strengthened, the hope that God is actively at work in our lives every day.
- Question 24: To what extent did these sermons increase your understanding of dealing with stressful situations in any way?
- Question 25: These sermons communicated God's grace in a way that affected your attitude (heart) toward Him.

The Likert scale used in these questions were: 1) A great deal; 2) Quite a bit; 3) Somewhat; and 4) Not at all. For each of the five questions, 88% of the respondents in the Detroit location answered 88% or more "A great deal" or "Quite a bit." The majority for every question responded "A great deal". The analysis of these five questions suggests that the respondents in the Detroit location experienced transformation after hearing the two sermons preached.

Sermon-Specific Postsurvey Questions for Novi

For the Novi location, the respondents were evenly distributed by age. The gender split was 45.16% women and 54.84% men. For each of the five questions, 76% of the respondents answered either "A great deal" or "Quite a bit" (appendix I). The analysis of the results of these five questions suggest that three-quarters of the respondents experienced transformation as a result of hearing the two sermons preached in the Novi location.

Verbatim Question Results

The results for the verbatim question (Q26) can be found in appendix J. This question yielded more detail into the thoughts of the respondents, as they were able to

write their response in their own words instead of selecting from multiple choices. The question was:

Please state briefly how these sermons showed the preacher's desire that the message would affect people's real lives by giving hope and direction. By listening to the sermon, could you sense God's Spirit challenging you to experience His grace (care, action, doing, activity), and strengthening you to serve Jesus with your heart? If the sermon seemed weak in this regard, please state why?

Appendix J displays the complete survey responses from both locations for question 26. There were 12 completed responses from the Detroit location and 19 completed responses from the Novi location. For the Detroit location, the 12 completed responses represented 71% of the respondents. For the Novi location, the 19 completed responses represented 61% of the respondents.

The responses were overall very positive and seemed to reflect a change in attitude/heart. For example, Respondent #4 from the Detroit location stated: "Rev. Donnie message was inspiring and challenging he inspired me to go and do something with the word that was preached today." Respondent #28 from Detroit stated: "The sermons provided me greater support as to how to seek a closer walk with God. As well as those strongholds that hinder me in my walk. Gotta stop carrying my water jar!"

From the Novi location, Respondent #57 stated: "Pastor Donnie has a gift for finding the examples of scripture that speak to my own human nature and he challenges you, just as Jesus did, to not stay the same. He powerfully delivers the hope of Jesus through his messages." Respondent #38 from Novi stated: "The sermon affected our lives by reinforcing how forgiving and kind God is. It reinforced that God will use anyone

even me. It helped me to understand that God’s grace & love. It is all that we need & will fill our hearts deepest longings for purpose, love, meaning and belonging.”

The analysis of the completed verbatim responses of question 26 from both locations indicate that the sermons affected their lives, challenged them to experience God’s grace, and strengthened them to serve Jesus with their heart. It could be concluded from the verbatim responses that the two sermons I preached in fact transformed the attitudes and hearts of those who responded to this question.

Interview Results

The interviews from individuals who heard the sermons at both locations followed a similar narrative as the findings from verbatim question 26. The interview responses can be found in appendix K and illustrate that the interviewees from both locations were positively impacted after hearing the two sermons preached. There were 14 total interviews—7 interviews at Novi and 7 interviews at Detroit. The interviews were either conducted by phone or in-person.

The specificity collected in the interview responses gave additional and further clarity on whether the project goals were achieved. For example, Appendix K shows that, at the Novi location, Interviewee #6 stated:

It was like a come to Jesus moment. As a believer, when we encountered the message, we felt “now it’s time to go and act.” I do think that it brought about change. We got a sense of how this (message/story of woman at the well encountering Jesus) impacts our everyday life. Jesus said I welcome you. The heart says, “here I am.” But it’s up to the individuals to respond and you also have to allow for the freedom of the Holy Spirit. There were people there who have known Christ for 20 years. The response for them was not to come “to” Christ, but to take action “in” Christ. For example, some said as a response to the sermons and in light of the upcoming Bible Camp: “We wish we could go do these things, but we don’t have the energy to run with the kids. But, we can pick up chips and bring them for the Bible Camp.”

At the Detroit location, Interviewee #6 stated: “I felt lifted when I walked away. Felt revived. Brought tears to me eyes. Took it through out the week. It moved my heart. I felt like I was the woman. And it made me want to go out.” Additionally, Interviewee 7# stated:

What stood out the most is the prayer at the beginning was helpful ... bringing those to the altar. It helped to prepare my mind to receive what was said. After the prayer I was able to walk away that I am not so bruised or broken—that God cannot help me.

After the sermon, I felt like I had a better way to dealing (coping) with the issues that I was dealing with.

Sermon gave me hope. I did have hope. In the past I never felt like I had hope in most services. Most services, I feel as heavy as I was before. Past messages amplified the failure that I felt. This was the opposite. I felt that God has not left me. There was a softer approach. Sometimes a softer voice can feel more loving. You were even keeled. It felt like you were telling us something that you believed.

An analysis of the completed interview responses indicated that my sermons did in fact affect the hearers’ lives, challenged them to experience God’s grace, and strengthened them to serve Jesus with their heart. It could be concluded and extrapolated from the 14 interviews at both locations that attitude or heart transformation was experienced in these 14 people during the process of the research.

In this chapter, I reported the data from my research, analyzed the data, interpreted the data, and connected the result to the project goals stated in chapter four. In the next chapter, I will attempt to assess how the research went and evaluate the findings from the surveys and interviews in detail. The weaknesses of the project will also be identified, and I will attempt to describe some suggestions on how I would do things differently if I had to do the project again.

CHAPTER 6

EVALUATION OF RESULTS

Introduction

In chapter five I reported the data, analyzed the data, interpreted the data, and connected the results to the project goals stated in chapter four, namely, the evaluation of the impact of sermons prepared using the attitudinal purpose statement within the preaching worksheet (appendix L and appendix M) on a listener's perceptions, thoughts, or beliefs. The goal was to produce sermons that transform the human heart rather than sermons that aimed at legalistic (behavior-based) goals. The attitudinal purpose statement used specifically for both sermons preached was:

That the hearers will see, think, and believe further that Jesus is the one who can fill every thirst, hunger, void that is in the human heart.

Overall, I think the research project addressed the problem of legalistic preaching as stated in my thesis. It was the project goal to design sermons utilizing the attitudinal purpose statement in the sermon preparation process. The attitudinal purpose statement was proven by the research findings to have impacted how the study group at both the Detroit and Novi locations thought, saw, and believed particularly about God and his actions toward us.

In this chapter, I will assess how well the research went and evaluate the findings in detail. Both the strengths and weaknesses of the project will be identified, and I will describe how things could have been done differently if I had to do the project again.

Project Strengths

Project Design

There are five strengths that I have identified for this project. The first was the project's design, which allowed for the capture and evaluation of longitudinal data across multiple preaching events via specific survey questions. These questions are identified as questions 1 through 14 (appendix A), in both the pre-sermon and postsermon surveys. These questions enabled the assessment of whether or not the sermonic events had an impact on the respondents' attitudes across time. This longitudinal feature enabled the assessment of change in their perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs as a result of the two sermonic events delivered. Additionally, this was done in two very different study locations. The first location was Crosspointe Meadows Church in Novi, Michigan. The second location was Overcomers Evangel Church in Detroit, Michigan.

Accounting for both the Novi and Detroit locations, there were more positive changes in the first 14 questions (between the pre-sermon survey and the postsermon survey) as result of the two preaching events than not. Therefore, as illustrated in appendix E and appendix F, it could be determined from the research that sermons deliberately designed for attitudinal application, using the attitudinal purpose statement, will have noticeable impact on the perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs of the listeners. In other words, the listeners experienced transformation of the heart, as a result of the sermons preached using the attitudinal purpose statement, and the project goals were achieved at this location.

Sermon-Specific Comparison Questions

The second strength I identified was the use of the sermon-specific comparison questions in the postsermon survey, used across both locations (appendix B). The six questions were:

- Question 15: Do sermons that you hear, change how you think about trouble/suffering?
- Question 16: Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny change how you think about trouble/suffering?
- Question 17. Do sermons that you hear preached; change how you feel about God's activity in this world?
- Question 18: Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny, change how you feel about God's activity in this world?
- Question 19: Have sermons motivated you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?
- Question 20: Did these sermons motivate you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?

These questions specifically addressed and assessed whether or not the respondents perceived there to be any difference across several measurable variables in my sermons versus sermons that they hear preached in general. These questions, as seen in appendix H and appendix I, allowed for the evaluation of whether or not sermons designed intentionally with the attitudinal purpose statements produced sermons that impacted heart transformation within the study group.

Sermon-Specific Questions

The third strength was from the sermon specific questions numbering from 21–25 in the postsermon survey (appendix B). These questions specifically asked for responses to the two sermons I preached:

- Question 21: Did these sermons motivate you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?
- Question 22: Through the sermon God reminded you of His active grace.
- Question 23: Through these sermons God created, or strengthened, the hope that God is actively at work in our lives every day.
- Question 24: To what extent did these sermons increase your understanding of dealing with stressful situations in any way?
- Question 25: These sermons communicated God's grace in a way that affected your attitude (heart) toward Him.

The Likert scale used in these questions were: 1) A great deal; 2) Quite a bit; 3) Somewhat; and 4) Not at all. The results from questions 21 -25, as seen in appendix H and appendix I, suggested that the majority of the respondents at the Detroit and Novi locations experienced transformation after hearing the two sermons preached.

Verbatim Question

The fourth strength in the research project was found in the utilization of the verbatim question 26 (appendix J). This question yielded more detail into the thoughts of the respondents, as they were able to write their responses in their own words, instead of selecting from multiple choices. This was very helpful in seeing more deeply how the respondents were thinking and feeling as a result of the sermons preached. The text of the question was:

Please state briefly how these sermons showed the preacher's desire that the message would affect people's real lives by giving hope and direction. By listening to the sermon, could you sense God's Spirit challenging you to experience His grace (care, action, doing, activity), and strengthening you to serve Jesus with your heart? If the sermon seemed weak in this regard, please state why?

The responses were overall very positive and reflected a change in attitude/heart.

Furthermore, the analysis of the completed verbatim responses of question 26 from both locations indicated that the sermons I preached affected their lives, challenged them to experience God's grace, and strengthened them to serve Jesus with their heart. It can be concluded that sermons deliberately designed for attitudinal application of the gospel do in fact impact heart transformation.

Post-sermon-series Interviews

The fifth strength was found in the post-sermon-series interviews. Interviews inherently are designed to produce deeper insights into individual's thoughts, ideas, and perspectives. I believe the level of specificity collected in the interview responses gave additional clarity on whether the project goals were achieved. The interviews from individuals who heard the sermons at both locations followed a similar narrative as the findings from the verbatim question 26. An analysis of the completed interview responses indicated very clearly that the sermons did in fact affect the hearers' lives, challenge them to experience God's grace, and strengthen them to serve Jesus with their heart. Thus, the project goals were achieved. It could be concluded and extrapolated, from the interviews at both locations that attitude or heart transformation was experienced in these 14 total interviewees during the process of the research. Therefore, intentionally designing sermons for attitudinal application will impact heart transformation.

To recap, the thesis project goals were to investigate the change in the listener's thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and perceptions due to sermons deliberately designed for attitudinal application of the gospel, using the attitudinal purpose statement in the preaching worksheet. It was intended that the research project would assess whether an

intentional focus on attitudinal application in the sermonic design could impact heart transformation. I had intended to evaluate whether this design change could produce preaching that speaks effectively to the heart, which ultimately impacts behavior (conduct). Based on the findings in the research, it can be concluded that the project criteria have been met, and in fact, using the attitudinal purpose statement in the preaching worksheet as part of the sermonic design does in fact aid in preparing sermons that impact heart transformation. In the next section, I will evaluate several project limitations.

Project Weaknesses

There are inherent weaknesses in most research project designs. This research project was no different. I have identified several that I would like to explore in further detail.

Number of Sermons Preached at Each Location

First, there was a limitation in the research due to the number of sermons preached for the sermon series at each location. There were only two sermons delivered as part of the sermon series contained within this research project. The weakness or limitation of only two sermons in a series for evaluation over time is that there may not have been enough time allowed for a thorough assessment of change across the sermonic events. If there were additional sermons implemented within the series, there may have been a greater opportunity to evaluate the project goals over a longer period of time. If I had to do this project over again, I would have added one additional sermon in the sermon series bringing the total number of sermons preached at each site to three.

Position as “Guest” Speaker

The second weakness in the project was the fact that the research was not done in my own congregation but in two separate congregations generously offered to me as research sites by two gracious pastors. Between my second and third year of the doctoral program, my family and I relocated from Minnesota to Michigan. On top of that, I was inspired to begin the process of planting a new church community, One Community Church in Michigan. At the time, however, we were not in a position to be a host site for the research. We were still meeting weekly in my home and the focus was on discipleship. Therefore, the limitation here was that a “guest” speaker in other locations, the survey response rates were not as high as I would have liked or expected. Although, sufficient data were eventually collected for the research project, at the beginning there was a risk of not begin able to collect enough. If I had to do the project over again, now that we are holding regular worship services, I would choose to host the research at One Community Church, the church community that I now pastor.

Time Commitment Split Between Church Plant and Research

Connected with the start of One Community Church, there was an additional limitation due to the overlapping of the research project with the church plant. In addition to the church plant, I was also in the process leading and growing a consumer brands company. Each of these activities require tremendous time commitments and resources. The intellectual, emotional, and physical obligation of just one of these activities was taxing enough. Throughout the process, there was always a conflict of interest. Thus, allocating how much time to give to each was always a challenge and a negotiation. If I had to do this again, this conflict could likely be avoided. If I had to do

the project again, I would likely postpone one of the activities to allow for the necessary focus after giving it much prayer and consideration.

Survey Tool's Limitations

Finally, I another weakness of the project was the use of the BMMRS survey as the sole survey template. Although helpful, there was an inherent limitation/weakness with the template design. This limitation was found in the fact that many of the questions were pre-determined and designed to assess general attitude questions. After conducting the research, the sermon specific questions appeared to illustrate the most meaningful data in regards to the project goals and criteria. Given what I know now, I would most likely construct a tool that would target more on the sermon specific questions instead of the general attitude assessment questions found in the BMMRS. In other words, survey instruments that target specific attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs, leading to the assessment of specific attitudes across time.

In this chapter, I assessed how well the research went and evaluated the findings in the surveys and interviews in detail. I outlined both self-identified strengths and weaknesses of the research project and described specific suggestions on how things could have been done differently.

In the next chapter, I will reflect on the research and provide an in-depth discussion on how the research project responded to the research problem. I will attempt to address whether my work will be useful in the broader way for other preachers, and if so, how. I also will attempt to identify additional steps or work that could be conducted in the future to follow on this work.

Additionally, I will attempt to discuss whether my work suggests additional

thesis projects in preaching. I will reflect on whether I have grown as an individual and as a preacher during the project and discuss how this experience has affirmed or impacted my understanding of preaching. Finally, I will reflect on whether the experience of developing my thesis has helped to improve my preaching.

CHAPTER 7

REFLECTIONS

Introduction

This chapter expresses my serious thoughts on the project and its results. The contemplations cover how the project responded to the problem stated, whether it will be useful in a broader way for other preachers, what additional steps or work could be done to follow it up, whether the project has impacted my own preaching, and whether the experience of developing my thesis helped to improve my preaching in general.

The research project was designed to evaluate the impact of sermons prepared using the attitudinal purpose statement within the preaching worksheet (appendix L and appendix M) on a listener's perceptions, thoughts, or beliefs. I hoped to study sermons that transform the human heart—as opposed to legalistic (behavior-based) sermons—within evangelical churches. The attitudinal purpose statement used specifically for the sermons preached on John 4:3-18 and John 4:39-42 is as follows: That the hearers will see, think, and believe further that Jesus is the one who can fill every thirst, hunger, and void that is in the human heart.

Reflections on Addressing the Problem

Overall, I think the research project addressed the problem of legalistic preaching. It was the research goal to encourage the design of sermons utilizing the attitudinal purpose statement in the sermon-preparation process. The attitudinal purpose statement was proven by the research findings to have impacted the study groups at both the Detroit and Novi locations. The study group's thoughts, sight, and beliefs about God and his actions toward us were positively changed, that is, transformed.

The findings illustrated that an intentional focus on attitude (the heart), instead of behavior, aids in gospel-oriented preaching. An attitudinal purpose statement, designed to impact the individual's heart, within the preparation process of the sermon, will assist in yielding positive results.

The Bigger Picture: Usefulness of the Research

It is the objective of the research conducted that this project would be helpful to a variety of preachers and pastors. Based on the favorable findings in the research, it can be concluded that the use of an attitudinal purpose statement in the preparation process can assist in developing sermons that transform the heart. I think if used intentionally in the preparation phase, it would be useful to preachers in a more general sense, as a guard against the unintended consequences of legalistic preaching. The exploration of this deliberate approach in the sermonic structure design could serve as a tool to redeem preaching that has good intentions but sometimes works against the living out of the gospel in day-to-day life.

Additionally, as preachers aim at preaching gospel-centered messages, they could utilize this theme statement to assist in designing sermons that direct the attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs of the listeners toward God. The goal would be to prepare sermons that focus more on God's activity toward us (grace), and less on our activity (works) toward him. Therefore, a particular importance of the attitudinal purpose statement is that it points to God. Sermons that have theme sentences that are God-conscious (focused) will inevitably facilitate grace encounters.

Thus, as a consideration for preachers, the attitudinal purpose statement should have God at the center. Unless God is at the center, there is no gospel (good news). If an

attitudinal purpose statement is self-centered, it will not lead to the heart change that preachers are ultimately seeking.

Going Forward: Additional Work to be Considered for Follow-Up

In addition to the usefulness of this research project in the preparation process of preachers, I also see additional areas for follow-up. Now that the research project is completed, there are specifically two additional areas that I have identified for future research. These areas serve as additional opportunities that could further strengthen the conclusions and outcomes of the study.

1. Explore whether or not sermons preached without the attitudinal purpose statement still yield similar results.
2. Explore further different types of specific attitudes, within the attitudinal purpose statement.

The follow-up action of exploring sermons preached without the preparation of the attitudinal purpose statement and juxtaposing them with sermons preached with the it might yield interesting comparison findings. It is my assumption, that these findings would further support the conclusions already identified in this research project, but I would like to see research exploring whether that assumption is accurate.

The second follow-up recommendation is the evaluation of specific types of attitudes within the attitudinal purpose statement. This would involve various sermons prepared with specific attitudinal targets for transformation. For example, theme statements would be focused on targeting types of attitudes such as “forgiveness” or “generosity.” It is my hope that this follow-up work would lead to further evidence that strengthens the existing findings of this research project.

Further study would be worthwhile in the area of exploring of different types of

specific attitudes within the attitudinal purpose statement. This further study could provide insights into how the attitudinal purpose statement assists as a sermon-preparation tool for specific attitude targets that could guard against legalistic preaching. One potential research project could explore questions and interviews focused on the study group's thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions on specific areas like "faith," "forgiveness," "restoration," or "resilience." The assessment and analysis of these questions and interviews could potentially provide specific findings that were not uncovered in this body of research.

Questions centered on these particular areas may provide additional useful data on whether sermons using the attitudinal purpose statement within the preaching worksheet are useful in helping to transform the human heart. Sample questions on faith could look like these:

- Do sermons that you hear change or impact your faith in a positive way?
- Did the three sermons preached change how you respond to adversity? If so, how?

It is the hope of the author that any additional research conducted would be helpful to the multitude of senior pastors, preachers, teachers or anyone who has the challenging task of preparing sermons weekly or multiple times per week, in the midst of an ever-changing culture and religious environment.

Personal Reflection on Personal Growth

The experience of conducting this research project has had a tremendous impact on my personal life. As a result of completing the research in conjunction with other factors, I feel that I have grown personally, and I hope that others can benefit from my

personal growth. Personal growth, to me, is the constant challenge to get better at what I do. It is also the recognition that effort is more important than perfection. Personal growth also means doing something out of my comfort zone. My father used to say to me, “There is one constant about life, and that is that it’s always changing.” Change is always upon us. It’s our choice whether or not we grow.

There certainly was a lot of change during the time of conducting the research project that resulted in and produced much personal growth. During this research project, my family and I relocated from Minnesota to Michigan. This transition happened the summer that we were beginning the research project. The challenge and instability of the move and the management of the research caused me to place more trust in the grace of God and less in myself. The challenges of finding a home, selecting schools, and filling the new home, along with the demands of this project have truly pushed me to depend, trust, and rely more on the inexhaustible grace of God.

Additionally, during this same period, I was involved in and ultimately led a new church plant. As one would assume, the time commitments and demands of pastoring a new church plant were enormous. This challenge caused me to place my trust and confidence in the grace of God, the power of God, and the will of God even more than I had before, causing me to grow personally and spiritually. I began to learn to find greater fulfillment from God than from anything else. The impossibility of my schedule opened up to me the infinite capacity of God’s grace. That in times of my greatest need, God’s strength was fully made manifest in my life.

Impact on Homiletic Understanding

The experience of developing my thesis has positively impacted my

understanding of biblical preaching. The most significant impact is that this process has affirmed deeply my understanding that preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is God's gracious act of redemption and the greatest story ever told, truly changes everything. Lives are transformed and the yearnings of our broken hearts are fulfilled (Psalms 145:19).

I am reminded of what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." The project reinforced my understanding that the gospel *is* the power of God, the strength of God and the capability of God.

The project also has challenged me to be consistently intentional in preparing grace-based, gospel-centered sermons that are designed to impact the attitudes of the people who hear the sermons. Now that I am pastoring One Community Church, I am faithfully preparing sermons on a weekly basis that I pray impact the hearts of those who hear my sermons.

Impact on Homiletic Improvement

The experience of developing my thesis has deeply helped to improve my preaching. Even though, there has been a tremendous amount of change in my life during the time of the research project and writing my thesis, I can say that my preaching has benefited from reflecting on and studying preaching that was intended to impact the perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs (attitudes) of the listeners. It has given me the opportunity to evaluate and assess the various dynamics of sermonic development that contribute to gospel-centric preaching, which produces sermons that are transformational to the human heart.

Additionally, the thesis has made me more intentional in setting aside time for the sermon-preparation process. Now, at various times of the day and during the week, I am able to do my best work in designing the sermon. Also, as I learned to balance many areas and responsibilities during this time and to recognize that my physical condition contributes to the attention and energy that I can give in sermon preparation, I have become more intentional in getting sufficient rest, exercise, and hydration.

Finally, if there was ever a point in the past when I preached legalistic sermons, it will most likely never happen again. I have a very high sensitivity to legalism or works-righteousness theology now; I have learned how very contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ it is. For me, there is a consistently intentional approach to ensure that the grace of God is felt, heard, and experienced in every sermon that I prepare and deliver. With the attitudinal purpose statement as the main theme statement, my sermons have a tool that can assist me in consistently keeping God at the center.

Final Thoughts

As stated in chapter 1, the focus of much evangelical preaching is legalistic and seeks behavioral change in the listener instead of facilitating an experience of God's grace through the gospel message of Jesus Christ. The danger is a performance-based gospel, and this can produce guilt or self-righteous behavior, rather than an emphasis on God's gracious acts toward humanity. In this thesis, I intended to challenge that focus of evangelical preaching and to explore whether a primary focus on gospel-centered preaching will lead to the attitudinal transformation in the listener, whose conduct may change as a response. The question that I sought to answer was this: Can designing the sermon to include a focused attitudinal purpose statement assist in overcoming legalistic

preaching in evangelical churches?

Overall, I think the research project addressed the problem of overcoming legalistic preaching, using the attitudinal purpose statement. It was the project goal to design sermons utilizing the attitudinal purpose statement in the sermon preparation process. The use of the attitudinal purpose statement, proven by the research findings, will aid in the preparation of sermons that ultimately impact the perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs of people who are in evangelical churches. My reflections and contemplations display how well the research project responded to the thesis problem, and how it will be useful in the broader context for other preachers and pastors. It is my prayer that this will work be useful and contribute to the overall scholarship in the area of biblical preaching.

APPENDIX A

PRE-SERMON SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. I find strength and comfort in my faith.
 - 1 - Many times a day
 - 2 - Every day
 - 3 - Most days
 - 4 - Some days
 - 5 - Once in a while
 - 6 - Never or almost never

2. I feel God's love for me, directly or through others.
 - 1 - Many times a day
 - 2 - Every day
 - 3 - Most days
 - 4 - Some days
 - 5 - Once in a while
 - 6 - Never or almost never

3. I desire to be closer to or in union with God.
 - 1 - Many times a day
 - 2 - Every day
 - 3 - Most days
 - 4 - Some days
 - 5 - Once in a while
 - 6 - Never or almost never

4. I believe in a God who watches over me.
 - 1 - Strongly agree
 - 2 - Agree
 - 3 - Disagree
 - 4 - Strongly disagree

5. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world.
 - 1 - Strongly agree
 - 2 - Agree
 - 3 - Disagree
 - 4 - Strongly disagree

6. I have forgiven myself for things that I have done wrong.
 - 1 - Always or almost always
 - 2 - Often
 - 3 - Seldom
 - 4 - Never

7. I have forgiven those who hurt me.
- 1 - Always or almost always
 - 2 - Often
 - 3 - Seldom
 - 4 - Never
8. I know that God forgives me.
- 1 - Always or almost always
 - 2 - Often
 - 3 - Seldom
 - 4 - Never
9. I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force.
- 1 - A great deal
 - 2 - Quite a bit
 - 3 - Somewhat
 - 4 - Not at all
10. I look to God for strength, support, and guidance.
- 1 - A great deal
 - 2 - Quite a bit
 - 3 - Somewhat
 - 4 - Not at all
11. I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life.
- 1 - Strongly agree
 - 2 - Agree
 - 3 - Disagree
 - 4 - Strongly disagree
12. In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you?
- 1 - Many times a day
 - 2 - Every day
 - 3 - Most days
 - 4 - Some days
 - 5 - Once in a while
 - 6 - Never or almost never
13. To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?
- 1 - Very religious
 - 2 - Moderately religious
 - 3 - Slightly religious
 - 4 - Not religious at all

14. To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?

- 1 - Very spiritual
- 2 - Moderately spiritual
- 3 - Slightly spiritual
- 4 - Not spiritual at all

APPENDIX B

POSTSERMON SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. I find strength and comfort in my faith.
 - 1 - Many times a day
 - 2 - Every day
 - 3 - Most days
 - 4 - Some days
 - 5 - Once in a while
 - 6 - Never or almost never

2. I feel God's love for me, directly or through others.
 - 1 - Many times a day
 - 2 - Every day
 - 3 - Most days
 - 4 - Some days
 - 5 - Once in a while
 - 6 - Never or almost never

3. I desire to be closer to or in union with God.
 - 1 - Many times a day
 - 2 - Every day
 - 3 - Most days
 - 4 - Some days
 - 5 - Once in a while
 - 6 - Never or almost never

4. I believe in a God who watches over me.
 - 1 - Strongly agree
 - 2 - Agree
 - 3 - Disagree
 - 4 - Strongly disagree

5. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world.
 - 1 - Strongly agree
 - 2 - Agree
 - 3 - Disagree
 - 4 - Strongly disagree

6. I have forgiven myself for things that I have done wrong.
 - 1 - Always or almost always
 - 2 - Often
 - 3 - Seldom

4 - Never

7. I have forgiven those who hurt me.

- 1 - Always or almost always
- 2 - Often
- 3 - Seldom
- 4 - Never

8. I know that God forgives me.

- 1 - Always or almost always
- 2 - Often
- 3 - Seldom
- 4 - Never

Religious or Spiritual Coping

Think about how you try to understand and deal with major problems in your life. To what extent is each of the following involved in the way you cope?

9. I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force.

- 1 - A great deal
- 2 - Quite a bit
- 3 - Somewhat
- 4 - Not at all

10. I look to God for strength, support, and guidance.

- 1 - A great deal
- 2 - Quite a bit
- 3 - Somewhat
- 4 - Not at all

11. I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life.

- 1 - Strongly agree
- 2 - Agree
- 3 - Disagree
- 4 - Strongly disagree

12. In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you?

- 1 - Many times a day
- 2 - Every day
- 3 - Most days
- 4 - Some days

- 5 - Once in a while
- 6 - Never or almost never

13. To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?

- 1 - Very religious
- 2 - Moderately religious
- 3 - Slightly religious
- 4 - Not religious at all

14. To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?

- 1 - Very spiritual
- 2 - Moderately spiritual
- 3 - Slightly spiritual
- 4 - Not spiritual at all

Sermon Affect

15. Do sermons that you hear, change how you think about trouble/suffering?

- 1 - A great deal
 - 2 - Quite a bit
 - 3 - Somewhat
 - 4 - Not at all
- If so, please explain.

16. Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny change how you think about trouble/suffering?

- 1 - A great deal
 - 2 - Quite a bit
 - 3 - Somewhat
 - 4 - Not at all
- If so, please explain.

17. Do sermons that you hear preached; change how you feel about God's activity in this world?

- 1 - A great deal
 - 2 - Quite a bit
 - 3 - Somewhat
 - 4 - Not at all
- If so, please explain how.

18. Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny, change how you feel about God's activity in this world?

- 1 - A great deal
- 2 - Quite a bit
- 3 - Somewhat

4 - Not at all
If so, please explain how.

19. Have sermons motivated you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?

1 – A great deal
2 – Quite a bit
3 – Somewhat
4 – Not at all
If so, please explain how.

20. Did these sermons motivate you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?

1 – A great deal
2 - Quite a bit
3 - Somewhat
4 - Not at all

21. Through the sermon God reminded you of His active grace:

1 – A great deal
2 - Quite a bit
3 - Somewhat
4 - Not at all

22. Through these sermons God created, or strengthened, the hope that God is actively at work in our lives every day:

1 – A great deal
2 - Quite a bit
3 - Somewhat
4 - Not at all

23. The sermons suggested specific ways to look for and see God's work in our world and even in our struggles:

1 – A great deal
2 - Quite a bit
3 - Somewhat
4 - Not at all

24. To what extent did these sermons increase your understanding of dealing with stressful situations in any way?

1 – A great deal
2 - Quite a bit
3 - Somewhat
4 - Not at all

25. These sermons communicated God's grace in a way that affected your attitude (heart) toward Him:

- 1 – A great deal
- 2 - Quite a bit
- 3 - Somewhat
- 4 - Not at all

26. Please state briefly how these sermons showed the preacher's desire that the message would affect people's real lives by giving hope and direction. By listening to the sermon, could you sense God's Spirit challenging you to experience His grace (care, action, doing, activity), strengthening serve Jesus with your heart? If the sermon seemed weak in this regard, please state why:

27. What is your age?

1. 18-24 years old
2. 25-34 years old
3. 35-44 years old
4. 45-54 years old
5. 55-64 years old
6. 65-74 years old
7. 75 years or older

28. What is your gender?

- 1 - Male
- 2 - Female

APPENDIX C

PRE-SERMON SURVEY RESULTS COMBINED LOCATIONS

Q1. I find strength and comfort in my faith		
Responses	Count	%
Many times a day	36	49.32%
Every day	20	27.40%
Most days	13	17.81%
Some days	4	5.48%
Once in a while	0	0%
Never or almost never	0	0%
Total Responses	73	

Q2. I feel God's love for me, directly or through others.		
Responses	Count	%
Many times a day	28	38.36%
Every day	24	32.88%
Most days	13	17.81%
Some days	7	9.59%
Once in a while	1	1.37%
Never or almost never	0	0%
Total Responses	73	

Q3. I desire to be closer to or in union with God		
Responses	Count	%
Many times a day	29	40.28%
Every day	31	43.06%
Most days	9	12.50%
Some days	3	4.17%
Once in a while	0	0%
Never or almost never	0	0%
Total Responses	72	

Q4. I believe in a God who watches over me		
Responses	Count	%
Strongly agree	66	90.41%
Agree	7	9.59%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total Responses	73	

Q5. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world		
Responses	Count	%
Strongly agree	30	41.67%
Agree	38	52.78%
Disagree	4	5.56%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total Responses	72	

Q6. I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong		
Responses	Count	%
Always or almost always	32	43.84%
Often	34	46.58%
Seldom	7	9.59%
Never	0	0%
Total Responses	73	

Q7. I have forgiven those who hurt me		
Responses	Count	%
Always or almost always	37	50.68%
Often	32	43.84%
Seldom	4	5.48%
Never	0	0%
Total Responses	73	

Q8. I know that God forgives me		
Responses	Count	%
Always or almost always	62	84.93%
Often	11	15.07%
Seldom	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total Responses	73	

Q9. I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	39	53.42%
Quite a bit	20	27.40%
Somewhat	14	19.18%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	73	

Q10. I look to God for strength, support, and guidance		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	47	64.38%
Quite a bit	23	31.51%
Somewhat	3	4.11%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	73	

Q11. I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life		
Responses	Count	%
Strongly agree	49	67.12%
Agree	23	31.51%
Disagree	1	1.37%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total Responses	73	

Q12. In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you		
Responses	Count	%
Many times a day	16	21.92%
Every day	13	17.81%
Most days	22	30.14%
Some days	19	26.03%
Once in a while	2	2.74%
Never or almost never	1	1.37%
Total Responses	73	

Q13. To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person		
Responses	Count	%
Very religious	20	27.40%
Moderately religious	39	53.42%
Slightly religious	7	9.59%
Not religious at all	7	9.59%
Total Responses	73	

Q14. To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person		
Responses	Count	%
Very spiritual	36	49.32%
Moderately spiritual	29	39.73%
Slightly spiritual	8	10.96%

Not spiritual at all	0	0%
Total Responses	73	

Q15. What Church are you from?		
Responses	Count	%
Detroit	25	34.25%
Novi	48	65.75%
Total Responses	73	

APPENDIX D

POSTSERMON SURVEY RESULTS COMBINED LOCATIONS

Q1. I find strength and comfort in my faith		
Responses	Count	%
Many times a day	28	58.33%
Every day	5	10.42%
Most days	10	20.83%
Some days	5	10.42%
Once in a while	0	0%
Never or almost never	0	0%
Total Responses	48	

Q2. I feel God's love for me, directly or through others		
Responses	Count	%
Many times a day	21	43.75%
Every day	15	31.25%
Most days	6	12.50%
Some days	4	8.33%
Once in a while	2	4.17%
Never or almost never	0	0%
Total Responses	48	

Q3. I desire to be closer to or in union with God		
Responses	Count	%
Many times a day	21	43.75%
Every day	18	37.50%
Most days	7	14.58%
Some days	2	4.17%
Once in a while	0	0%
Never or almost never	0	0%
Total Responses	48	

Q4. I believe in a God who watches over me		
Responses	Count	%
Strongly agree	43	89.58%
Agree	5	10.42%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total Responses	48	

Q5. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world		
Responses	Count	%
Strongly agree	28	58.33%
Agree	18	37.50%
Disagree	2	4.17%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total Responses	48	

Q6. I have forgiven myself for things that I have done wrong		
Responses	Count	%
Always or almost always	22	45.83%
Often	21	43.75%
Seldom	4	8.33%
Never	1	2.08%
Total Responses	48	

Q7. I have forgiven those who hurt me		
Responses	Count	%
Always or almost always	19	40.43%
Often	25	53.19%
Seldom	3	6.38%
Never	0	0%
Total Responses	47	

Q8. I know that God forgives me		
Responses	Count	%
Always or almost always	38	80.85%
Often	8	17.02%
Seldom	1	2.13%
Never	0	0%
Total Responses	47	

Q9. I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	18	38.30%
Quite a bit	19	40.43%
Somewhat	10	21.28%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	47	

Q10. I look to God for strength support and guidance		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	33	70.21%
Quite a bit	10	21.28%
Somewhat	4	8.51%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	47	

Q11. I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life		
Responses	Count	%
Strongly agree	31	65.96%
Agree	15	31.91%
Disagree	1	2.13%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total Responses	47	

Q12. In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you		
Responses	Count	%
Many times a day	9	19.15%
Every day	10	21.28%
Most days	18	38.30%
Some days	8	17.02%
Once in a while	2	4.26%
Never or almost never	0	0%
Total Responses	47	

Q13. To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person		
Responses	Count	%
Very religious	10	21.28%
Moderately religious	27	57.45%
Slightly religious	6	12.77%
Not religious at all	4	8.51%
Total Responses	47	

Q14. To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person		
Responses	Count	%
Very spiritual	20	41.67%
Moderately spiritual	24	50.00%
Slightly spiritual	4	8.33%

Not spiritual at all	0	0%
Total Responses	48	

Q15. Do sermons that you hear, change how you think about trouble/suffering?		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	24	50.00%
Quite a bit	18	37.50%
Somewhat	6	12.50%
Not at all	0	0%
Other (Please specify)	0	0%
Total Responses	48	

Q16. Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny change how you think about trouble/suffering		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	18	38.30%
Quite a bit	19	40.43%
Somewhat	10	21.28%
Not at all	0	0%
Other (Please specify)	0	0%
Total Responses	47	

Q17. Do sermons that you hear preached; change how you feel about God's activity in this world?		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	18	37.50%
Quite a bit	22	45.83%
Somewhat	8	16.67%
Not at all	0	0%
Other (Please specify)	0	0%
Total Responses	48	

Q18. Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny, change how you feel about God's activity in this world		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	20	43.48%
Quite a bit	18	39.13%
Somewhat	8	17.39%
Not at all	0	0%
Other (Please specify)	0	0%
Total Responses	46	

Q19. Have sermons motivated you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	24	50.00%
Quite a bit	22	45.83%
Somewhat	2	4.17%
Not at all	0	0%
Other (Please specify)	0	0%
Total Responses	48	

Q20. Did these two sermons motivate you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	16	35.56%
Quite a bit	21	46.67%
Somewhat	8	17.78%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	45	

Q21. Through the sermon God reminded you of His active grace:		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	27	57.45%
Quite a bit	17	36.17%
Somewhat	3	6.38%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	47	

Q22. Through these sermons God created, or strengthened, the hope that God is actively at work in our lives every day:		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	27	58.70%
Quite a bit	15	32.61%
Somewhat	4	8.70%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	46	

Q23. The sermons suggested specific ways to look for and see God's work in our world and even in our struggles:		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	24	52.17%
Quite a bit	16	34.78%
Somewhat	6	13.04%
Not at all	0	0%

Total Responses	46	
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Q24. To what extent did these sermons increase your understanding of dealing with stressful situations in any way		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	18	39.13%
Quite a bit	19	41.30%
Somewhat	9	19.57%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	46	

Q25. These sermons communicated God's grace in a way that affected your attitude (heart) toward Him:		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	27	58.70%
Quite a bit	15	32.61%
Somewhat	4	8.70%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	46	

Q27. What is your age?		
Responses	Count	%
18-24 years old	4	8.33%
25-34 years old	9	18.75%
35-44 years old	5	10.42%
45-54 years old	7	14.58%
55-64 years old	6	12.50%
65-74 years old	9	18.75%
75 years or older	8	16.67%
Total Responses	48	

Q28. What is your gender?		
Responses	Count	%
Male	21	43.75%
Female	27	56.25%
Total Responses	48	

Q29. What church are you from		
Responses	Count	%
Detroit	17	35.42%
Novi	31	64.58%

Total Responses	48	
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APPENDIX E

DETROIT RESULTS FROM THE CHANGES IN RESPONSES FROM 1ST 14
QUESTIONS

Respondent 4 had all positive changes in questions 5, 6, 10, and 12 (double positive) after listening to both sermons. For Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world”, the response changed from “Agree” to “Strongly agree”. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response changed from “Often” to “Always or almost always”. For Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response changed from “Quite a bit” to “A great deal”. And for Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response changed from “Most days” to “Many times a day”. Comparing these changes in response over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 10 had positive changes in questions 7 and 10, with a negative change in question 2 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others”, the response decreased from “Many times a day” to “Every day”. For Q7, “I have forgiven those who hurt me”, the response increased from “seldom” to “Often”. And for Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response changed from “Quite a bit” to “A great deal”. Although Q2 had a response decrease, the positive changes of Q7 and Q10 suggests that sermons preached had an overall positive impact this respondent’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions.

Respondent 11 had negative changes in questions 2, 9, 10, and 11, with a

positive change in question 13 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others”, the response decreased from “Every day” to “Most days”. For Q9, “I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force”, the response decreased from “Quite a bit” to “Somewhat”. For Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response changed from “Quite a bit” to “Somewhat”. For Q11, “I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life”, the response decreased from “Agree” to “Disagree”. The change in Q11 could be due to the interpretation of the word “religious”. If after hearing the two sermons, having “religious” beliefs were interpreted as “bad”, then this response change could also be interpreted as a “positive change”. For Q13, “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person”, the responses increased from “Not religious at all” to “Slightly religious”. This response seems to be inconsistent with the response and change in Q11. On one hand they “Agree” that they try hard to carry religious beliefs over into all of their dealings in life, but then identify as “Not religious at all” in the same survey. This interpretation of Q11 and Q13 would warrant excluding these results from any final analysis. Even so, the rest of the changes suggest that the sermons preached had an overall negative impact on this respondent’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions.

Respondent 12 had changes in questions 12 and 13 after listening to both sermons. For Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response decreased from “Many times a day” to “Every day”. And for Q13, “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person”, the response changed from “Very religious” to “Moderately religious”. This “religiosity” response change could actually be a positive change depending on how this

respondent defined “religious”. Though inconclusive, the rest of the changes suggest that the sermons preached had an overall negative impact on this respondent’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions.

Respondent 15 had changes in questions 2, 3, and 6 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others”, the response increased from “Every day” to “Many times a day”. For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in union with God”, the response changed from “Every day” to “Many times a day”. And for Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response changed from “Always or almost always” to “Often”. This change in response for Q6 seems to be more or less a correction of self-perception. Thus, comparing these changes over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions.

Respondent 16 had a change in question 12 after listening to both sermons. For Q12, “ In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response increased from “Every day” to “Many times a day”. Thus, comparing this change over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions.

Respondent 17 had all positive changes in questions 2, 13, and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others”, the response increased from “Every day” to “Many times a day”. For Q13, “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person”, the response changed from “Moderately religious” to “Very religious”. And for Q14, “To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person”, the response changed from “Moderately spiritual” to “Very spiritual”.

Q2 indicates a change in perception of God, while Q13 and Q14 indicate a position change in perception of self after listening to the two sermons. Thus, comparing these changes over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 18 had changes in questions 3, 5, 12 and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q3, "I desire to be closer to or in union with God", the response changed from "Many times a day" to "Every day". For Q5, "I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world", the response changed from "Strongly agree" to "Agree". For Q12, "In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you", the response increased from "Some days" to "Most days". And for Q14, "To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person", the response changed from "Slightly spiritual" to "Moderately spiritual". These changes indicate a change in attitude and perception of God (Q3) and of self (Q5, Q12, and Q14) after listening to the two sermons. Thus, comparing these changes over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall impact on the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 19 had changes in questions 5, 6, 13 and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q5, "I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world", the response changed from "Strongly agree" to "Agree". For Q6, "I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong", the response changed from "Always or almost always" to "Often". For Q13, "To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person", the response changed from "Very religious" to "Moderately religious". And for Q14, "To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person",

the response changed from “Very spiritual” to “Moderately spiritual”. These changes for this respondent indicate a negative change of the desired attitude and perception after listening to the two sermons.

Respondent 20 had changes in response to questions 1, 2, 3, 11, and 12 after listening to both sermons. For Q1, “I find strength and comfort in my faith”, the response increased from “Most days” to “Every day”. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others”, the response decreased from “Every day” to “Most days”. For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in union with God”, the response increased from “Every day” to “Many times a day”. For Q11, “I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life”, the response increased from “Agree” to “Strongly agree”. And for Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response increased from “Most days” to “Many times a day”. These changes indicate a change in attitude and perception of Faith (Q1), God (Q2 & Q3) and of self (Q11 & Q12) after listening to the two sermons. Thus, comparing these changes over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 21 had changes in response to questions 6, 9, 10, and 13 after listening to both sermons. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response changed from “Often” to “Always or almost always”. For Q9, “I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force”, the response changed from “A great deal” to “Quite a bit”. For Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response increased from “Quite a bit” to “A great deal”. And for Q13,

“To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person”, the response increased from “Moderately religious” to “Very religious”. These changes for Respondent 21 indicate a change in attitude and perception of God and self after listening to the two sermons. Thus, comparing these changes over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 22 had changes in response to questions 5 and 7 after listening to both sermons. For Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world”, the response increased from “Agree” to “Strongly agree”. And for Q7, “I have forgiven those who hurt me”, the response decreased from “Always or almost always” to “Often”. After comparing these changes over the course of the two sermons, it is reasonable to conclude that the sermons had an overall neutral impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 23 had changes in response to questions 2, 5, 6, 9, and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, “I feel God’s love for me, directly or through others”, the response changed from “Many times a day” to “Most days”. For Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world”, the response increased from “Agree” to “Strongly agree”. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response increased from “Often” to “Always or almost always”. For Q9, “I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force”, the response changed from “A great deal” to “Quite a bit”. For Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response increased from “Quite a bit” to “A great deal”. And for Q14, “To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person”, the

response increased from “Moderately spiritual” to “Very spiritual”. Comparing these changes over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 24 had changes in response to questions 1, 2, 5, and 6 after listening to both sermons. For Q1, “I find strength and comfort in my faith”, the response changed from “Every day” to “Most days”. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others”, the response changed from “Most days” to “Some days”. For Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world”, the response increased from “Agree” to “Strongly agree”. And for Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response increased from “Often” to “seldom”.

Comparing these changes over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall negative impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

APPENDIX F

NOVI LOCATION RESULTS FROM THE CHANGES IN RESPONSES FROM 1ST
14 QUESTIONS

Respondent 1 had changes in questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 10 after listening to both sermons. For Q1, “I find strength and comfort in my faith”, the response decreased from “Every day” to “Most days”. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others” the response increased from “Most days” to “Every day”. For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in union with God”, the response increased from “Every day” to “Many times a day”. For Q5, I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world, the response increased from “Agree” to “Strongly Agree”. For Q9, “I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force”, the response increased from “Somewhat” to “Quite a bit”. For Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response increased from “Quite a bit” to “A great deal”. And for Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response decreased from “Most days” to “Some days”. Of the seven questions with changes, five had positive changes. Comparing these changes in responses over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 3 had changes in questions 9, 12, and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q9, “I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force”, the response decreased from “A great deal” to “Quite a bit”. For Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response decreased from “Every day” to “Most days”. Of the three questions with

changes, two had negative changes. Comparing these changes in responses over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons did not have the desired impact on the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 4 had changes in questions 2, 3, 9, and 10 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, "I feel God's love for me, directly or through others" the response increased from "Every day" to "Many times a day". For Q3, "I desire to be closer to or in union with God", the response increased from "Some days" to "Every day". For Q9, "I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force", the response increased from "Somewhat" to "Quite a bit". And for Q10, "I look to God for strength, support, and guidance", the response increased from "Quite a bit" to "A great deal". Of the seven questions with changes, five had positive changes. Comparing these changes in response over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 5 had changes in questions 3, 6, 8, and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q3, "I desire to be closer to or in union with God", the response decreased from "Every day" to "Most days". For Q6, "I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong", the response increased from "Often" to "Always or almost always". For Q8, "I know that God forgives me", the response increased from "Often" to "Always or almost always". And for Q14, "To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person", the response decreased from "Very spiritual" to "Moderately spiritual". Of the 4 questions with changes, two had positive changes. However, Q14 could be interpreted as a correction in self-assessment, thus a positive change. Therefore, comparing these changes in responses over the course of the two sermons,

suggest that the sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 6 had changes in questions 2, 6, 13, and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, "I feel God's love for me, directly or through others", the response increased from "Every day" to "Many times a day". For Q6, "I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong", the response decreased from "Always or almost always" to "Often". For Q13, "To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person", the response changed from "Very religious" to "Moderately religious". And for Q14, "To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person", the response changed from "Very spiritual" to "Moderately spiritual". Of the 4 questions with changes, only one had a positive change. However, Q13 and Q14 could be interpreted as a correction in self-assessment, thus a positive change. Therefore, comparing these changes in responses over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall neutral impact on the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 8 had changes in questions 3, 5, and 11 after listening to both sermons. For Q3, "I desire to be closer to or in union with God", the response increased from "Every day" to "Many times a day". For Q5, "I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world", the response increased from "Disagree" to "Agree". And for Q11, "I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life", the response increased from "Agree" to "Strongly agree". Therefore, comparing these changes in responses over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 9 had changes in questions 2, 6, 9 and 11 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, "I feel God's love for me, directly or through others", the response increased from "Most days" to "Every day". For Q6, "I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong", the response increased from "Often" to "Always or almost always". For Q9, "I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force", the response changed from "A great deal" to "Quite a bit". And for Q11, "I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life", the response changed from "Strongly agree" to "Agree". Of the 4 questions with changes, two had positive changes and two had negative changes. The outcome of the sermon series impact is inconclusive for this respondent. Therefore, comparing these changes in responses over the course of the two sermons, suggest that the sermons had an overall neutral impact on the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 12 had changes in questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, "I feel God's love for me, directly or through others", the response increased from "Most days" to "Every day". For Q3, "I desire to be closer to or in union with God", the response decreased from "Every day" to "Most days". For Q4, "I believe in a God who watches over me", the response decreased from "Strongly agree" to "Agree". For Q5, "I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world", the response increased from "Agree" to "Strongly agree". For Q7, "I have forgiven those who hurt me", the response decreased from "Always or almost always" to "Often". For Q8, "I know that god forgives me", the response decreased from "Always or almost always" to "Often". For Q9, "I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force", the response changed from "Quite a bit" to

“Somewhat”. For Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response decreased from “Quite a bit” agree” to “Somewhat”. For Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response decreased from “Every day” to “Most days”. And for Q13, “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person”, the response changed from “Moderately religious” to “Slightly religious”. Of the 10 questions with changes, only 2 had positive changes and 8 had negative changes. Therefore, comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall negative impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 15 had changes in questions 5, 6, and 13 after listening to both sermons. For Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world”, the response increased from “Agree” to “Strongly Agree”. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response decreased from “Always or almost always” to “Often”. And for Q13, “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person”, the response changed from “Moderately religious” to “Not religious at all”. Of the 3 questions with changes, only one had a positive change. However, Q13 could be interpreted as a correction in self-assessment, thus a positive change and not a negative change. Therefore, comparing these changes in responses over the course of the two sermons suggest that the sermons had an overall neutral impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 21 had changes in questions 2, 3, 7 and 11 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others”, the response decreased from “Most days” to “Some days”. For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in

union with God”, the response decreased from “Every day” to “Most days”. For Q7, “I have forgiven those who hurt me”, the response decreased from “Often” to “Seldom”. And for Q11, “I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life”, the response changed from “Strongly agree” to “Agree”. Of the 4 questions with changes, all had negative changes. Therefore, based on our criteria, these changes in responses over the course of the two sermons suggest that the sermons had a negative impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 22 had changes in questions 5, 6, 8, 11, 12 and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world”, the response increased from “Disagree” to “Agree”. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response increased from “Seldom” to “Often”. For Q8, “I know that God forgives me”, the response decreased from “Always or almost always” to “Often”. For Q11, “I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life”, the response increased from “Disagree” to “Agree”. For Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response increased from “Never or almost never” to “Some days”. And for Q14, “To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person”, the response increased from “Slightly spiritual” to “Moderately Spiritual”. Of the 6 questions with changes, 5 had positive changes. Comparing the changes in responses suggest that the sermons had a positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 23 had changes in questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, and 13 after listening to both sermons. For Q1, “I find strength and comfort in my faith”, the

response decreased from “Most days” to “Some days”. For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in union with God”, the response decreased from “Most days” to “Some days”. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response decreased from “Often” to “Never”. For Q7, “I have forgiven those who hurt me”, the response decreased from “Often” to “Seldom”. For Q9, “I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force”, the response decreased from “Quite a bit” to “Somewhat”. For Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response decreased from “Quite a bit” agree” to “Somewhat”. For Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response decreased from “Some days” to “Once and a while”. And for Q13, “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person”, the response decreased from “Moderately religious” to “Slightly religious”. Of the 8 questions with changes, all 8 had negative changes. Therefore, comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall negative impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 24 had changes in questions 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 12, and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q1, “I find strength and comfort in my faith”, the response decreased from “Every day” to “Some days”. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others”, the response decreased from “Some days” to “Once and a while”. For Q4, “I believe in a God who watches over me”, the response decreased from “Strongly agree” to “Agree”. For Q8, “I know that god forgives me”, the response decreased from “Always or almost always” to “Often”. For Q9, “I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force”, the response increased from “Somewhat” to “Quite a bit”. For

Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response increased from “Some days” to “Most days”. And for Q14, “To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person”, the response changed from “Moderately spiritual” to “Slightly spiritual”. Of the 7 questions with changes, only 2 had positive changes and 5 had negative changes. Therefore, comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall negative impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 26 had changes in questions 3, 6, and 12 after listening to both sermons. For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in union with God”, the response increased from “Every day” to “Many times a day”. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response increased from “Seldom” to “Often”. And for Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response decreased from “Many times day” to “Every day”. Of the 3 questions with changes, all 2 had positive changes. Comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 27 had changes in questions 2, 3, and 9 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others”, the response decreased from “Every day” to “Most days”. For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in union with God”, the response decreased from “Every day” to “Most days”. And for Q9, “I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force”, the response increased from “Quite a bit” to “A great deal”. Of the 3 questions with changes, all 2 had negative changes. Comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an

overall negative impact on the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 32 had changes in questions 2, 6, 7, 8, 12, and 13 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, "I feel God's love for me, directly or through others", the response increased from "Some days" to "Most days". For Q6, "I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong", the response decreased from "Always or almost always" to "Often". For Q7, "I have forgiven those who hurt me", the response decreased from "Always or almost always" to "Often". For Q8, "I know that God forgives me", the response decreased from "Often" to "Seldom". For Q12, "In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you", the response decreased from "Every day" to "Most days". And for Q13, "To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person", the response decreased from "Moderately religious" to "Slightly religious". Of the 6 questions with changes, 5 had negative changes. Therefore, comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall negative impact on the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 34 had changes in questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13 and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q1, "I find strength and comfort in my faith", the response increased from "Some days" to "Most days". For Q3, "I desire to be closer to or in union with God", the response increased from "Some days" to "Most days". For Q4, "I believe in a God who watches over me", the response increased from "Agree" to "Strongly agree". For Q5, "I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world", the response decreased from "Strongly agree" to "Agree". For

Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response increased from “Often” to “Always or almost always”. For Q8, “I know that God forgives me”, the response increased from “Often” to “Always or almost always”. For Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response increased from “Somewhat” to “Quite a bit”. For Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response increased from “Most days” to “Every day”. For Q13, “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person”, the response increased from “Slightly religious” to “Moderately religious”. And for Q14, “To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person”, the response increased from “Slightly spiritual” to “Moderately spiritual”. Of the 10 questions with changes, 9 had positive changes. Comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 35 had changes in questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 12 after listening to both sermons. For Q1, “I find strength and comfort in my faith”, the response increased from “Every day” to “Many times a day”. For Q2, “I feel God’s love for me, directly or through others”, the response increased from “Most days” to “Many times a day”. For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in union with God”, the response increased from “Most days” to “Every day”. For Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world”, the response increased from “Agree” to “Strongly agree”. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response decreased from “Always or almost always” to “Often”. And for Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”,

the response decreased from “Every day” to “Most days”. Of the 6 questions with changes, 4 had positive changes. Comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 38 had changes in questions 1, 2, and 5 after listening to both sermons. For Q1, “I find strength and comfort in my faith”, the response increased from “Every day” to “Many times a day”. For Q2, “I feel God’s love for me, directly or through others”, the response increased from “Some days” to “Most days”. And for Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world”, the response decreased from “Strongly agree” to “Agree”. Comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 44 had a change in question 13 after listening to both sermons. For Q13, “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person”, the response increased from “Slightly religious” to “Moderately religious”. Comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had a moderately positive impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 45 had changes in questions 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, and 12 after listening to both sermons. For Q2, “I feel God's love for me, directly or through others”, the response decreased from “Many times a day” to “Every day”. For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in union with God”, the response decreased from “Many times a day” to “Every day”. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response decreased from “Always or almost always” to “Often”. For Q9, “I think about

how my life is part of a larger spiritual force”, the response decreased from “A great deal” to “Somewhat”. For Q11, “I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life”, the response increased from “Agree” to “Strongly agree”. And for Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response increased from “Most days” to “Every day”. Of the 6 questions with changes, 4 had negative changes. Comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall negative impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 49 had changes in questions 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 after listening to both sermons. For Q1, “I find strength and comfort in my faith”, the response increased from “Every day” to “Many times a day”. For Q2, “I feel God’s love for me, directly or through others”, the response increased from “Most days” to “Every day”. For Q5, “I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world”, the response decreased from “Agree” to “Disagree”. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response increased from “Often” to “Always or almost always”. For Q9, “I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force”, the response decreased from “A great deal” to “Somewhat”. For Q10, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response decreased from “A great deal” to “Quite a bit”. For Q11, “I look to God for strength, support, and guidance”, the response decreased from “Strongly agree” to “Agree”. For Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response decreased from “Many times a day” to “Most days”. And for Q14, “To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person”, the response decreased from

“Moderately spiritual” to “Slightly spiritual”. Of the 9 questions with changes, 6 had negative changes and 3 had positive changes. Comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall negative impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

Respondent 55 had changes in questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 12, and 13 after listening to both sermons. For Q1, “I find strength and comfort in my faith”, the response decreased from “Many times a day” to “Most days”. For Q2, “I feel God’s love for me, directly or through others”, the response decreased from “Many times a day” to “Some days”. For Q3, “I desire to be closer to or in union with God”, the response decrease from “Many times a day” to “Every day”. For Q6, “I have forgiven myself for the things that I have done wrong”, the response decreased from “Often” to “Seldom”. For Q7, “I have forgiven those who hurt me”, the response decreased from “Always or almost always” to “Often”. For Q8, “I know that God forgives me”, the response decreased from “Always or almost always” to “Often”. For Q12, “In an average week, does the sermon impact the way you see the world and the people around you”, the response decreased from “Most days” to “Some days”. And for Q13, “To what extent to you consider yourself a religious person”, the response increased from “Slightly religious” to “Very religious”. Of the 8 questions with changes, 6 had negative changes and 2 had positive changes. Comparing these changes in responses suggest that the two sermons had an overall negative impact on the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of self and God.

APPENDIX G

SERMON SPECIFIC QUESTION COMBINED LOCATION

Q15. Do sermons that you hear, change how you think about trouble/suffering?		
Responses	Total	%
A great deal	24	50.00%
Quite a bit	18	37.50%
Somewhat	6	12.50%
Not at all	0	0.00%
Other (Please specify)	0	0.00%
Total Responses	48	

Q16. Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny change how you think about trouble/suffering		
Responses	Total	%
A great deal	18	38.30%
Quite a bit	19	40.43%
Somewhat	10	21.28%
Not at all	0	0.00%
Other (Please specify)	0	0.00%
Total Responses	47	

Q17. Do sermons that you hear preached; change how you feel about God's activity in this world?		
Responses	Total	%
A great deal	18	37.50%
Quite a bit	22	45.83%
Somewhat	8	16.67%
Not at all	0	0.00%
Other (Please specify)	0	0.00%
Total Responses	48	

Q18. Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny, change how you feel about God's activity in this world		
Responses	Total	%
A great deal	20	43.48%
Quite a bit	18	39.13%
Somewhat	8	17.39%
Not at all	0	0.00%
Other (Please specify)	0	0.00%
Total Responses	46	

Q19. Have sermons motivated you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions		
Responses	Total	%
A great deal	24	50.00%
Quite a bit	22	45.83%
Somewhat	2	4.17%
Not at all	0	0.00%
Other (Please specify)	0	0.00%
Total Responses	48	

Q20. Did these two sermons motivate you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?		
Responses	Total	%
A great deal	16	35.56%
Quite a bit	21	46.67%
Somewhat	8	17.78%
Not at all	0	0.00%
Total Responses	45	

APPENDIX H

SERMON SPECIFIC QUESTION DETROIT LOCATION

Q15. Do sermons that you hear, change how you think about trouble/suffering?					
Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents		
A great deal	11	64.71%			
Quite a bit	6	35.29%			
Somewhat	0	0%			
Not at all	0	0%			
Other (Please specify)	0	0%			
(Did not answer)	0	0%			
Total Responses	17		20%	40%	60% 80% 100%

Q16. Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny change how you think about trouble/suffering					
Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents		
A great deal	11	64.71%			
Quite a bit	4	23.53%			
Somewhat	2	11.76%			
Not at all	0	0%			
Other (Please specify)	0	0%			
(Did not answer)	0	0%			
Total Responses	17		20%	40%	60% 80% 100%

Q17. Do sermons that you hear preached; change how you feel about God's activity in this world?					
Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents		
A great deal	11	64.71%			
Quite a bit	5	29.41%			
Somewhat	1	5.88%			
Not at all	0	0%			
Other (Please specify)	0	0%			
(Did not answer)	0	0%			
Total Responses	17		20%	40%	60% 80% 100%

Q18. Did the two sermons preached by Pastor Donny, change how you feel about God's activity in this world					
Responses	Count	%	Percentage of total respondents		

A great deal	14	82.35%	
Quite a bit	0	0%	
Somewhat	2	11.76%	
Not at all	0	0%	
Other (Please specify)	0	0%	
(Did not answer)	1	5.88%	
Total Responses	17		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Q19. Have sermons motivated you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions			
Responses	Count	% Percentage of total respondents	
A great deal	12	70.59%	
Quite a bit	5	29.41%	
Somewhat	0	0%	
Not at all	0	0%	
Other (Please specify)	0	0%	
Total Responses	17		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Q20. Did these two sermons motivate you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?			
Responses	Count	% Percentage of total respondents	
A great deal	11	64.71%	
Quite a bit	4	23.53%	
Somewhat	2	11.76%	
Not at all	0	0%	
Total Responses	17		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Q21. Through the sermon God reminded you of His active grace:		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	14	82.35%
Quite a bit	3	17.65%
Somewhat	0	0%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	17	

Q22. Through these sermons God created, or strengthened, the hope that God is actively at work in our lives every day:		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	15	88.24%
Quite a bit	2	11.76%

Somewhat	0	0%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	17	

Q23. The sermons suggested specific ways to look for and see God's work in our world and even in our struggles:

Responses	Count	%
A great deal	13	76.47%
Quite a bit	3	17.65%
Somewhat	1	5.88%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	17	

Q24. To what extent did these sermons increase your understanding of dealing with stressful situations in any way

Responses	Count	%
A great deal	10	58.82%
Quite a bit	5	29.41%
Somewhat	2	11.76%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	17	

Q25. These sermons communicated God's grace in a way that affected your attitude (heart) toward Him:

Responses	Count	%
A great deal	14	82.35%
Quite a bit	2	11.76%
Somewhat	1	5.88%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	17	

Table 64: Illustration of postsermon survey Question 25 for Detroit location results.

Q27. What is your age?

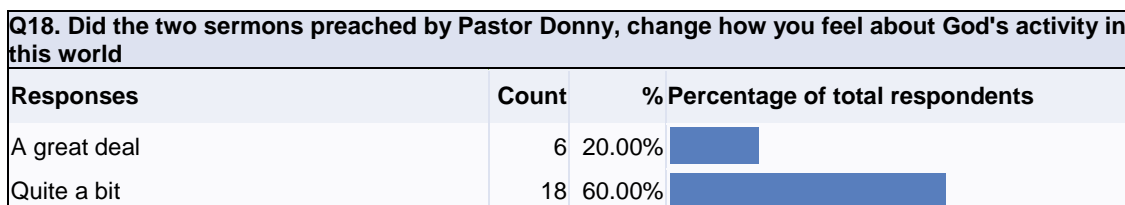
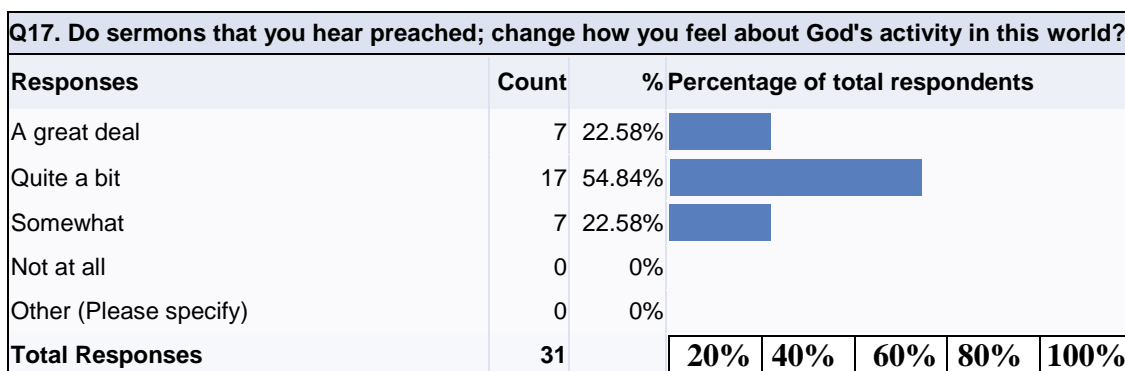
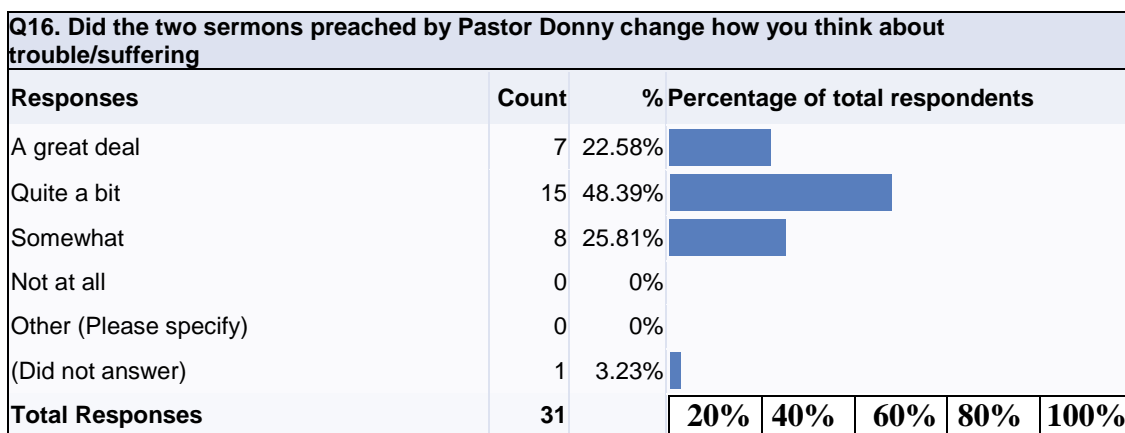
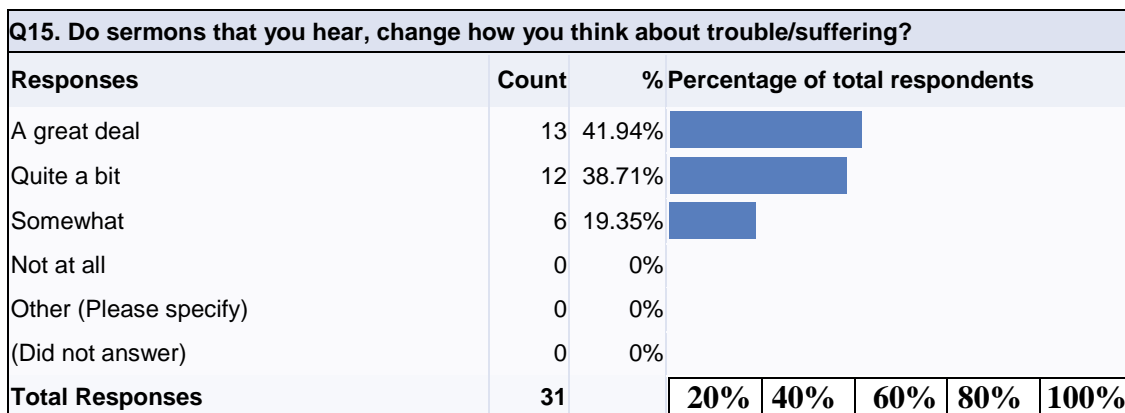
Responses	Count	%
18-24 years old	0	0%
25-34 years old	4	23.53%
35-44 years old	0	0%
45-54 years old	2	11.76%


55-64 years old	4	23.53%
65-74 years old	4	23.53%
75 years or older	3	17.65%
Total Responses	17	




Q28. What is your gender?		
Responses	Count	%
Male	4	23.53%
Female	13	76.47%
Total Responses	17	




APPENDIX I

SERMON SPECIFIC QUESTIONS NOVI LOCATION



Somewhat	6	20.00%	
Not at all	0	0%	
Other (Please specify)	0	0%	
Total Responses	30		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Q19. Have sermons motivated you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions			
Responses	Count	% Percentage of total respondents	
A great deal	12	38.71%	
Quite a bit	17	54.84%	
Somewhat	2	6.45%	
Not at all	0	0%	
Other (Please specify)	0	0%	
Total Responses	31		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Q20. Did these two sermons motivate you to change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?			
Responses	Count	% Percentage of total respondents	
A great deal	5	17.86%	
Quite a bit	17	60.71%	
Somewhat	6	21.43%	
Not at all	0	0%	
Total Responses	28		20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Q21. Through the sermon God reminded you of His active grace:		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	13	43.33%
Quite a bit	14	46.67%
Somewhat	3	10.00%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	30	

Q22. Through these sermons God created, or strengthened, the hope that God is actively at work in our lives every day:		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	12	41.38%
Quite a bit	13	44.83%
Somewhat	4	13.79%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	29	

Q23. The sermons suggested specific ways to look for and see God's work in our world and even in our struggles:		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	11	37.93%
Quite a bit	13	44.83%
Somewhat	5	17.24%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	29	

Q24. To what extent did these sermons increase your understanding of dealing with stressful situations in any way		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	8	27.59%
Quite a bit	14	48.28%
Somewhat	7	24.14%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	29	

Q25. These sermons communicated God's grace in a way that affected your attitude (heart) toward Him:		
Responses	Count	%
A great deal	13	44.83%
Quite a bit	13	44.83%
Somewhat	3	10.34%
Not at all	0	0%
Total Responses	29	

Q27. What is your age?		
Responses	Count	%
18-24 years old	4	12.90%
25-34 years old	5	16.13%
35-44 years old	5	16.13%
45-54 years old	5	16.13%
55-64 years old	2	6.45%
65-74 years old	5	16.13%
75 years or older	5	16.13%

Total Responses	31
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Q28. What is your gender?		
Responses	Count	%
Male	17	54.84%
Female	14	45.16%
Total Responses	31	

APPENDIX J

QUESTION 26 VERBATIM RESPONSES

DETROIT LOCATION

Q26. Please state briefly how these sermons showed the preacher's desire that the message would affect people's real lives by giving hope and direction. By listening to the sermon, could you sense God's Spirit challenging you to experience His grace (care, action, doing, activity), and strengthening you to serve Jesus with your heart? If the sermon seemed weak in this regard, please state why:

Response No:	Response Text
2	To go out and talk to others about Jesus and use the righteousness of God to testify to others.
4	Rev. Donnie message was inspiring and challenging he inspired me to go and do something with the word that was preached today.
10	Yes! Not, Not Weak! Strong in Faith! Wish he would have taken more time to just let the Holy Ghost...I sensed it! Keep going!
20	The message was great and brought a great understanding!
21	By hearing sermons stated on a regular basis will definitely remind people of what we need, how to live, care & support one another! We need on a regular basis!
23	By telling story in a way that people will understand better.
16	Delivery
24	Yes, I could sense Gods Spirit to some degree. The sermon was good to the point and using examples and props were good.
25	By using your personal testimony, being real will plant a seed giving hope, direction because I am the righteousness of God. Water is significant in many ways. Thank you Rev. Bryant.
28	The sermons provided me greater support as to how to seek a closer walk with God. As well as those strongholds that hinder me in my walk. Gotta stop carrying my water jar!
18	Pastor related the idea concept of leaving the water jar at well to people carry their burdens (Water jar). And how we should/need to leave those burdens w/Jesus and tell the world how we have been changed by the Grace of God.
22	The messages magnified the fact that God's grace is sufficient and continuous. The vertical relationship ignites horizontal love and forgiveness.

Q26. Please state briefly how these sermons showed the preacher's desire that the message would affect people's real lives by giving hope and direction. By listening to the sermon, could you sense God's Spirit challenging you to experience His grace (care, action, doing, activity), strengthening serve Jesus with your heart? If the sermon seemed weak in this regard, please state why:

Response No:	Response Text
5	Knowing Jesus is always with me and an important part of my life, thoughts, and actions.
14	Explained how we need to share our Jesus story with others and come to Jesus for strength and support.
19	God can use anyone-anytime-anyway. His acceptance is merciful and marvelous. Pastor Donny you are indeed God's servant! Helper!
26	Demonstrated story in today's everyday occurrences and needs that I could relate to. Gave me a new look and insight into a familiar story.
32	Very active, not boring. Good examples and relating to today's times. Funny and fun.
34	I could feel God's spirit! I really enjoy Donnie's messages!
35	There is always hope-Don't let the trials of living in Today's world burden you with hopelessness! Good sermon. Good energy.
36	Good sermon touched me. Giving me hope and direction in life.
40	He was here two weeks. He cares so much is so knowledgeable.
55	Could sense a challenge to serve, and accept, to welcome. The message was clear and I enjoyed the sermon and participating by getting on the stage.
3	Pastor Donnie did a great job making the scripture come alive relevant. The object lesson of the water jar as idols in our (my) lives was impactful. The hope provided in the sermon is that we are all candidates for God's grace pointed to my part in delivering that message to a world in need.
6	The sermons did a great job of "showing" what Jesus did with the woman at the well and how it is an example of what he wants to do with us. Great job breaking the story "versus: . Saw it from a little different aspect.
8	The sermons were very strong in reminding me that I belong to Jesus and refreshed the vision he gave me forty years ago. Looking back to see how God changed my life and my desire also

	for my family and grandchildren.
15	The sermon was thoughtfully prepared, focused on Jesus, what He has done for us, and what we need to do; Identify our water jar, and leave it at the feet of Jesus. Pastor Donnie was preaching in the Spirit. Praise God! Great job Pastor Donnie.
27	I enjoyed the messages regarding hope & change. Pastor gave examples of spreading the joy/hope @ work, coffee shops, or anywhere. How could you not spread the word after hearing the greatest story ever?
38	The sermon affected our lives by reinforcing how forgiving and kind God is. It reinforced that God will use anyone even me. It helped me to understand that God's grace & love. It is all that we need & will fill our hearts deepest longings for purpose, love, meaning and belonging.
44	Strong sense of God moving me throughout the sermon. God continues to be present in new challenges in my life that take me out of old comfort zones and move me toward the unknown. This sermon reminded me of God's love/grace even in the unknown.
45	Not weak @ all. Made me want to stop & see the little things in everything I do and see. God's grace in people & things. Great sermon.
57	Pastor Donnie has a gift for finding the examples of scripture that speak to my own human nature and he challenges you, just as Jesus did, to not stay the same. He powerfully delivers the hope of Jesus through his messages.

APPENDIX K

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

NOVI LOCATION INTERVIEWS	
Interview No:	Interview Text
1	Great message. It really impacted me. The gospel was shared and heard.
2	When you brought everyone on the stage that was very impactful. To visually see the scriptures was powerful.
3	For me it was intriguing to see people who I know have been in church for whole life and are typically not responsive to a sermon be responsive to and engaged in the sermon series. Very impactful.
4	I have been around a long time and I have heard this story preached many times. Never have I heard it like it was preached today.
5	A couple of things struck me. Style was engaging. Narrative, but it was beyond narrative. It was a recasting of the story. Always a challenge of preaching a familiar story. It was interesting and allowed people to look again at change. What struck me was in 2 nd week. The question of her change was noticeable to the villagers...says a lot. Change was clear. Something was different with the woman. You can't help the process of change in our lives was slow and subtle. Seeing her as a focal point of change was powerful. She is the catalyst of a change that touches an entire village. When you were preaching it struck me that we underestimate the power of one.
6	It was like a come to Jesus moment. As a believer, when we encountered the message.... we felt "now it's time to go and act". "I do think that it brought about change". We got a sense of how this (message/story of woman at the well encountering Jesus) impacts our everyday life. Jesus said I welcome you. The heart says, "here I am". But it's up to the individuals to respond and you also have to allow for the freedom of the Holy Spirit. There were people there who have known Christ for 20 years. The response for them was not to come <u>to</u> Christ, but to take action <u>in</u> Christ. For example, some said as a response to the sermons and in light of the upcoming Bible Camp: "We wish we could go do these things, but we don't have the energy to run with the kids. But, we can pick up chips and bring them for the Bible Camp."
7	Seemed Nervous the first message. Seemed as if you could not get

	into the message due to the new environment. Needed to get out of you. Then you let go and let God. 1 st message it was all about Donny. 2 nd Message t was all about the message. We did receive the message.
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DETROIT LOCATION INTERVIEWS

Interview No:	Interview Text
1	Sermon experience was Good. Theological context was very thoughtful. The women leaving her Jar at the well was very thought provoking. Never heard it that way. It caused us to think about leaving everything with Jesus instead of carrying it with us. Message at Detroit had more emotion than at Novi. I think that as you are delivering your message, you are very mindful of how you need to manage the message to your audience, which might get in the way or hinder how God might to use you through the message. Managing to cater to certain audiences that could be possibility a hindrance. You deliver a different message and it has a different impact without your script.
2	It was an ideal evangelism message. About how we could be a witness for Jesus. Good presentation. Reached the hearts and minds of the people.
3	What I got out of it. How preachers try to get their messages to people. Giving them examples of what you can learn from it. How we come to church for something (water) and we get something more from it (life). A lot of preachers try to go for that. But they don't grasp that. The interaction is good. The way you preach captures the ears, use examples real life, and you talk to your audience. I love the way you preach and how you preach.
4	It was a message about evangelism. About how we could be a witness for Jesus. Good presentation.
5	The sermon series did touch and bring a greater awareness of the grace of God in my life. The series brought an awareness of God's activity in my life. I try to be an active seeker of his presence. The information was not brand new but was refreshing and relevant. I have a perspective of the Gospel, that includes more than what was preached at the time. I believe, it was preached excellently and superiorly in terms of examples, in terms of pace, in terms of bringing to bear the text.
6	I felt lifted when I walked away. Felt revived. Brought tears to me eyes. Took it through out the week. It moved my heart. I felt like I was the woman. And it made me want to go out.
7	Take away. What stood out the most is the prayer at the beginning

was helpful...bringing those to the altar. It helped to prepare my mind to receive what was said. After the prayer I was able to walk away that I am not so bruised or broken - that God cannot help me.

After the sermon, I felt like I had a better way to dealing (coping) with the issues that I was dealing with.

Sermon gave me hope. I did have hope. In the past I never felt like I had hope in most services. Most services, I feel as heavy as I was before. Past messages amplified the failure that I felt. This was the opposite. I felt that God has not left me. There was a softer approach. Sometimes a softer voice can feel more loving. You were even keeled. It felt like you were telling us something that you believed.

APPENDIX L

PREACHING WORKSHEET 1ST SERMON

1. What does this passage say to me? John 4 vs. 4-18. That Jesus is the GIFT (that came by grace, to do what we could not do for ourselves. This gift is what Jesus calls “living water”
2. What does this passage say to the needs of the people in our time? That Jesus is the GIFT that came by grace, to do what we could not do for ourselves.
3. What is the “bad news” in the text? What is the “bad news” for our time?

TEXT Trouble: This unnamed Samaritan woman had a spiritual thirst that natural H₂O water could not quench. Jesus seems to suggest that “all of us” have this same spiritual thirst. He says “Everyone who drinks natural water to quench this thirst” will be thirsty again. This is a problem.

- a. TIME TROUBLE: Natural water, could be replaced with any idol that you and I go after to satisfy this thirst. We all
 - b. These idols fail to fulfill their promise of satisfaction.
 - c. Law of diminishing returns.
 - d. This cycle
4. The good news for this woman is that Jesus is offering a gift – that will never dissatisfy in meeting the spiritual void/thirst that is in the human heart!. What we could not do for ourselves. This gift is what Jesus calls “living water”. He tells here to go to get your husband.

The good news in the text is that there is ONE who came to fix, what we could not fix for ourselves.

5. Attitudinal purpose statement
 - a. I propose: That the hearers will see, think, and believe further that Jesus is the one who can fill every thirst, hunger, void that is in the human heart.
 - b. To the end the hearers will: See, Think, and believe differently about Jesus.
 - c. What shall we celebrate? That Jesus is the One.

APPENDIX M

PREACHING WORKSHEET 2ND SERMON

1. What does this passage say to me? John 4:39-42.
 - a. Faith is more than a response to the faith of another (Samaritan's), but comes from our own experience with Christ.
2. What does this passage say to the needs of the people in our time? That Jesus is the GIFT that came by grace, to do what we could not do for ourselves.
3. What is the "bad news" in the text? What is the "bad news" for our time? A) Water Jar.

TEXT Trouble: This unnamed Samaritan woman had a spiritual thirst that natural H₂O water could not quench. Jesus seems to suggest that "all of us" have this same spiritual thirst. He says "Everyone who drinks natural water to quench this thirst" will be thirsty again. This is a problem.

- a. TIME TROUBLE: Natural water, could be replaced with any idol that you and I go after to satisfy this thirst. We all
 - b. These idols fail to fulfill their promise of satisfaction.
 - c. Law of diminishing returns.
4. The good news for this woman is that Jesus is offering a gift – that will never dissatisfy in meeting the spiritual void/thirst that is in the human heart! What we could not do for ourselves. This gift is what Jesus calls "living water". He tells here to go to get your husband. The good news in the text is that there is ONE who came to fix, what we could not fix for ourselves.
 5. Attitudinal purpose statement
 - a. I propose: That the hearers will see, think, and believe further that Jesus is the one who can fill every thirst, hunger, void that is in the human heart.
 - b. To the end the hearers will: See, Think, and believe differently about Jesus.
 - c. What shall we celebrate? That Jesus is the One.

APPENDIX N

1ST SERMON – JOHN 4:3-18**The Greatest News Ever Told**

John 4:3-18

We don't know her name or age. But her conversation with the Lord is his longest one-on-one conversation recorded in Scripture. Everybody loves getting good news. And that is what this woman from Samaria received.

It was high noon on a hot day. Jesus, tired from traveling, chose a sensible rest stop @ Jacob's well outside the town of Sychar - while waiting for his disciples to go into town for food. The unnamed woman appeared with clay jar in hand and Jesus made a simple request: "Will you give me a drink?" (John 4:7). Jesus was not being "misogynistic", but in fact he was challenging cultural rules.

(1) Jews weren't supposed to speak to Samaritans. You see, Samaritans and Jews actually worshiped the same God and used the 5 books of the Torah. But they despised one another's places of worship.⁸⁵ Mount Gerizim for the Samaritans and Jerusalem. **Let me park right there**, Sunday morning (around this time) is one the most divided times of the week. And not only around cultural lines...but also within families. Families are divided because of our places worship! We are more loyal at times to where we worship than to WHO we are CONNECTED with

(2) Men weren't permitted to address women without their husbands present.

And (3) rabbis had no business speaking to shady ladies such as this one at wells (I am just saying). But, Jesus - was willing to toss out the rules, but this sista was not feeling it just yet. She said: "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman, how can you ask me for a drink?" (John 4:9). You See, she was focused on the law; but Jesus focused on grace. The law tells us what we must do, but the Gospel of Grace tells us what God has already done!

Craig Keener Argues, "Jesus broke the rules".

HOW MANY TIMES HAS GRACE BROKE THE RULES FOR YOU? How many times did we receive something that we did not EARN! How many times has GOD extended mercy, when you should have been judged...How many times have you prayed.... GOD HELP ME please, and I promise this will be the last time.....Jesus Broke the Rules!

⁸⁵ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Jn 4:3-4.

An Offer She Couldn't Refuse

TEXT Trouble: This unnamed Samaritan woman had a spiritual thirst that natural water could not quench. Jesus seems to suggest that “all of us” have this same spiritual thirst. He says “Everyone who drinks natural water to quench this thirst” will be thirsty again. This is a problem.

- I can't go further unless you see this, “everyone who drinks natural water, to quench their thirst will be thirsty again.
- When you go home today and someone asks you, “what did the preacher preach”, tell them that “everyone who drinks natural water – to quench their thirst – will be thirsty again.
- When you get on Facebook tonight – I want you to post “everyone who drinks natural water - to quench their thirst – will be thirsty again.
- While you are dreaming tonight “I want my face to pop up in your mind” – and Ever
- You want me to move on, I want to make sure you got it!
- Everyone who drinks natural water – to quench his or her thirst – will be thirsty again.

The reason why this is important is universally – everyone has a spiritual thirst. Deep down in our Deoxy-ribo-nucleic acid (DNA) is this thirst for “Meaning, Purpose, Identify, and Satisfaction”.

This “Natural water”, therefore is a metaphor for any idol that you and I go after to satisfy this thirst. Some of us have tried to quench it with our Careers, Some of us in the pursuit pleasure, others have to seek fulfillment in our relationship, marriages, and families.....but the sad reality is “you will thirst again.

- d. These idols fail to fulfill their promises.
 - e. And you end up experiencing “Law of diminishing returns.” - Which implies there is a bottom!
6. The good news in the text for this woman is that Jesus is offering a gift – that will never dissatisfy in meeting the void in the human heart!

HER IDOLS

He tells here to go to get your husband. Shes says “I have no husband” - and Jesus says you are right – “you had five, trying to Meaning and significance”. And the one you are with now (number six) – aint going to do it either....And here I am the 7th man.....and seven is the number of **completion**.

“I am the ONE who came to fix, what you could not fix for yourself”.

That's the greatest news that you and I have ever heard! That in our brokenness, GOD in Christ – broke into the earth in order to “make right what had been made wrong.” We ought to celebrate, that Jesus is the One.

In Colossians 1:28, Paul says – HIM WE PROCLAIM. Its funny, because uses bad grammar to get his point across by placing the object HIM before the word proclaim. “Him we proclaim.”

Flavius Claudius Julianus, one of the late Roman Emperors – during his reign Began to persecute the Early Christian church and even restored pagan worship as the state religion. In order to impress his friends, he had taunted one faithful Christians named Agaton – “How is your carpenter from Nazareth doing? Is he finding work these days? Without delay, Agaton replied – “Perhaps he is taking time out from building mansions for the faithful, to build a coffin for your empire!”

Him WE Proclaim!

Everybody say HIM. And because some of you might be thinking about the Tigers Game at 1:00, I just want to make sure you know who HIM is.

- HIM is the one who is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father. Say HIM!
- The creator and sustainer of heaven AND earth. HIM!
- He is the one who pre-existed time, and at the right time broke into time to make right what we could not make right ourselves. HIM!
- The one who was born a virgin in a MOTEL 6 in Bethlehem. HIM!
- The one who perform miracles over sickness, blindness, and even death itself! HIM!
- The one who died substitutionally on the cross for you and I. HIM!
- The one whose death was so **powerful**, the Roman Soldier – who had a front row seat, said “Truly this was the son of God”. HIM!
- The one who rose after 3 days with all power in his HANDS and who ascended to the heaven and is now seated at the right hand of the father HIM.
- The one who is coming back any day now, as a matter of fact, he could come before I finish this sermon!

Him we proclaim! – THIS IS, the Greatest News Ever Told!

Stand to your feet - High five your neighbor for me and say “I got some great news”!

APPENDIX O

2ND SERMON JOHN 4:39-42

Part 2 - The Greatest News Ever Told

John 4:39–42

Among all religions Christianity is unique. Other religions are about a set of propositions. Buddha, Muhammad, Confucius... whoever, when they came and taught it was ALL about the content of their message. The important thing was that their disciples, those who would follow after them, would believe what they teach. But, when Jesus came, He did not say, "Believe what I teach." He said, "Believe in me." His message was not, "This is the way, the truth, or the life." But, He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Among all religions, Christianity is uniquely person driven. It is story driven. The message of Christianity is what Christ did AND what Christ did for me....

And so it was with the lady from Samaria. She is fact, the first true evangelist, at least in John's Gospel after John the Baptist. Both Andrew and Philip went out and shared their story but only to one or two people. But this lady from Samaria won an entire town for Christ. Let me pause for a moment... Sometimes I wonder, that with all the other things being marketed and promoted in our towns and cities around us – I wonder is there a city waiting for us to share our story and experience – and "Make Jesus Famous"?

You have to remember this woman was an outcast, a black-sheep, a marginalized person. She was a woman in a male driven society. Her theology was suspect and her past decisions and relationships were even more questionable. She had no credentials. She would never have made the cut on any of our church boards. I am sure she would not have been on the praise team.....I mean, even the other women appeared to not want to be seen with her – which is why she had to come to the well at Noon. But, the only thing she had was a real (authentic) encounter with Jesus. And that's more than enough.

For this part of the sermon – I am going to need some help. 12 men. (they come on stage, and I give them the McDonald's bags)

After Jesus told her that he was the Messiah, the disciples returned with the food and were shocked that Jesus was talking to a woman. None of them had the nerve to ask what he was doing, but you could imagine what they were thinking.

The Woman left her water Jar beside the well and ran back to the village telling everyone to "come see the man who told me everything I ever did? (pause)

Symbolically, she left the thing that she was using to try to attempt to quench her spiritual thirst. Can I ask you a question? What do you need to leave by the well? What

are you holding on to that you need to let go? What are you using to “try” to fill the void in your heart?

While the people were rushing to meet this HIM, his disciples said Teacher, eat something...but Jesus said - “I have the kind of food, you know nothing about”.....

He said I have the kind of food you know nothing about...he is talking about his Assignment to do the Will of the Father.

(have the volunteers sit down)....

Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus, because of what the woman Said. “He told me everything I did”. (Pause)

Can you imagine what this would of looked like? For them to believe, and unbelievable story, from an unbelievable person. Here status in the community immediately changes.

When Jesus impacts a person’s life, they are changed forever. The story of Jesus is the story of life. It is the story of God’s Grace toward humanity. It is a tale of new life and forgiveness, and when you and I encounter Him we take part in this newness of life.

We are never the same! And when we have a true encounter Jesus, the game is never over. God always has another move.... You become part of His story and begin a new story of your own. The life of the resurrected Son of God becomes your story.

You can all they back to the OT, God tried everything to get us to come on the inside. He tried doves, bullocks and lambs for sacrificing but nobody heard what he was saying.

Then one day he said, the only way I am going to get them to understand – is I’ve got to come where they are.”

And the WORD BECAME FLESH and Dwelt among us, and we beheld the glory of the only begotten full of TRUTH.

Closing:

I am so glad, that I have somebody who can walk with me. I am so glad that I have somebody who talks my language. Every now and then, when you find you find yourself in the “night season” of your life...all you’ve got to remember “Is we’ve Got a God that is right there with us”! Is there anybody here that knows what I am talking about? That we’ve got a God...who is right here with us!

This new life He has given you is meant for sharing.

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