

## **BIBLICAL PREACHING: THE BOOK OF PROVERBS**

BIBL/MNST 6220 (3 hours) Fall 2014, Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:15 pm

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DRAFT SYLLABUS: SOME CHANGES TO SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE MADE, BUT REQUIRED TEXTS WILL STAY THE SAME

### **Course Goals**

1. Learn strategies for reading and interpreting the Book of Proverbs by paying attention to its literary-rhetorical design and the features it shares with ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature.
2. Gain an understanding of the role proverbial wisdom plays in shaping the life of communities, especially the church.
3. Develop facility in bridging the contexts of ancient and contemporary worlds by writing and delivering sermons on texts from the Book of Proverbs.
4. Appreciate the contribution of wisdom literature (particularly the Book of Proverbs) to a biblical theology of the Old and New Testaments.
5. To allow our study of the Scriptures and our hearing of the preached word to bring us to greater knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col 2:3)

### **Texts**

#### Required

1. Proverbs Manuscript (to be handed out in class.)
2. Clifford, R. J., Proverbs: A Commentary, Westminster John Knox, 1999.
3. Rein Bos, We Have Heard That God Is with You: Preaching the Old Testament, Eerdmans, 2008.
4. McKenzie, A. M., Hear and Be Wise: Becoming a Preacher and Teacher of Wisdom Abingdon, 2004.

#### Recommended

1. Foster, R. Money, Sex, and Power, Harper and Row, 1985.
2. Fokkelman, J. P. Reading Biblical Poetry: An Introductory Guide, WJKP, 2001.
4. McKenzie, A. M., Preaching Proverbs: Wisdom for the Pulpit, WJKP, 1996.
5. I hope that at some point during the course, you will purchase another commentary of your choice to add to your library. You will have opportunity to consult other commentaries during your weekly study.

## Assignments and Grading

1. Weekly journal entries, including your own study of the Proverbs manuscript, consultation of commentaries and secondary sources, and completion of assigned reading and reflection questions. (25%)

The results of your study, reading and reflection will be recorded in a journal that will be handed in. I suggest you use a loose-leaf binder instead of a spiral notebook so you can easily separate the entries and place them in a file folder to give to me. **You will hand in journal entries and corresponding pages of the Proverbs manuscript each week.**

Here's how to prepare your journal.

- a. **Manuscript Study:** Read and reread the assigned section of your Proverbs manuscript, making marks and writing comments and questions as you go. Then go over the focus text in the same way another two or three times. In class we will make a few comments on the assigned section and then spend most of the time in the focus text.

*To start your journaling, summarize what you believe are your most significant observations and questions in one or two paragraphs on a separate piece of paper or computer file.*

- b. **Research:** Use the observations and questions from your manuscript study to guide your reading of at least two commentaries (Clifford and one other of your choice- note which you use). You may also wish to consult Bible dictionaries, computer programs (eg. BibleWorks), and other resources. As with the manuscript study, you may want to explore a few questions from the entire assigned section and then turn your attention to the focus text.

*In your journal entry, write a few paragraphs to note a few important historical and theological insights you gained as a result of your study. What concerns of the Proverbs speak most readily to the concerns of today and which do not? How would you go about creating a bridge between the ancient and contemporary worlds? Using Wilson's "Four Pages of the Sermon" approach, try to identify the trouble and grace in the text, and then write a few examples of trouble and grace in our world.*

- c. **Assigned Readings:** *After you have completed the reading, write a few paragraphs in response to the reflection questions in the syllabus. The guiding question throughout is: What are you learning about preaching from your study of the Book of Proverbs and wisdom literature?*

2. One report to the class with critique of another preacher's sermon from Proverbs (10%)

Search the periodical index and collections such as *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching* to find the sermon. Report on the context in which the sermon was preached and any

biographical information on the preacher you can find. Write an outline of the sermon. Base your critique on the preacher's use of Scripture, theological assumptions, connection to life issues, and rhetorical strategies. Offer some of your own response to the sermon as you make your assessment of its success. **Prepare a handout with copy of the sermon and your own review and critique (two pages, single spaced).**

3. A twelve to fifteen minute presentation of an "Instruction" based on a text from Proverbs 1-9 (25%)

Remembering that we preach in an age that thinks of wisdom in terms of self-help literature, interpret a text from Proverbs 1-9 for a contemporary audience. Questions to consider in developing your presentation are: What socio-cultural dynamics of the ancient and contemporary worlds are important? What understanding of wisdom do you hope to communicate? How will you make sure your presentation is distinct from a self-help message and is centered on the gospel?

**Due at the time of your presentation will be a typed, double-spaced manuscript of your presentation and a two to three page record of your exegetical work, sermon strategy, and reflections on the process of preparing your talk. Schedule a video review with the instructor (you are welcome to come after the final sermon).**

4. A sermon based on a text from Proverbs 10-31. (35%)

Include exegetical notes and reflection based on the guidelines developed in class. **Due at the time you deliver your sermon will be a typed, double-spaced manuscript of your sermon and exegetical notes.**

5. Attendance and participation in class discussion and sermon feedback sessions. (5%)