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The Spiritual Benefits of Expositional Listening on the Sabbath



We thank God that we can worship Him in His sanctuary as a gathered church despite the pandemic these 2 years (except for the Circuit Breaker from Apr to Jun 2020). From this Sunday onwards, we can sing with our masks on. But there are many distractions in life especially from our handphone. There are skills and discipline involved in the proper listening of God's word preached and writing of notes. Expositional listening or intensive and purposeful listening to the Word with a view to both understand and apply has many spiritual benefits,

First, we need to cultivate a hunger for God's Word. As we tune our ears to sound preaching that expounds the salient points of a particular passage of Scripture, we grow accustomed to knowing and appreciating the Word of God. **We become fluent in the language of Zion and conversant with**

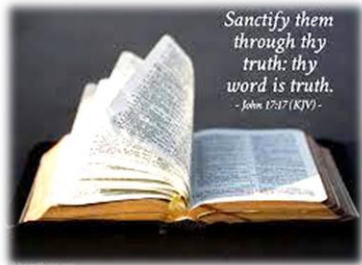


its biblical themes. His Word, His voice becomes sweet to us (Psa 119:103-104); and as it does, we are better able to push to the background the many voices that rival God's voice for control over our lives. Expositional listening

helps us to develop a good ear to hear what the preacher says about God and His Word.

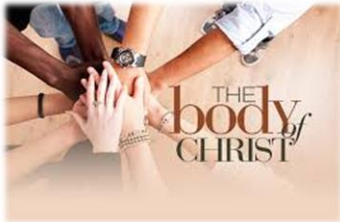
The second benefit follows from the first. **Expositional listening helps us to focus on God's Word, to know His Word and follow Him without distractions.** God's agenda in His Holy Word for His people takes center stage, reorders our priorities, and directs us in the course that most honours Him. The Lord Himself proclaimed, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"* (Jn 10:27). Listening to the voice of Jesus as it is heard in His Word is critical to following Him. Make an effort to write down short notes during the service when you learn something meaningful. Short notes are better than long memories.

Third, expositional listening has the benefit of preserving the truth of the word and the gospel and our lives from spiritual and moral corruption. The Scripture tells us *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables”* (2 Tim 4:3-4). The failure of expositional listening can have disastrous effects. It can miss good messages and even inadvertently allow false teachers to enter the church and hinder the gospel. Ultimately, the truth is displaced by myths and falsehood in the mass and social media where many are misled or deceived. Where members cultivate the habit of expositional listening, they are enlightened and will guard themselves against *“itching ears”*, protect their family and the church from spiritual deception and declension. Lazy listeners are vulnerable to falsehood.



The fourth benefit, then, is that expositional **listening encourages faithful pastors and preachers in their didactic ministry which is a biblical thing to do.** Those men who serve faithfully in the ministry of the Word are worthy of double honour (1 Tim 5:17). Hebrews 12:8-9 says, *‘But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?’* Few things are more discouraging or dishonouring to the servants of God than a congregation inattentive to the Word of God. Faithful men flourish in their ministry at the fertile reception of the preached Word. They are made all the more effective when their people give ear to the Lord’s voice and give evidence of being shaped by it. As church members, we can pray and care for our pastors and teachers and help to prevent unnecessary discouragement and fatigue by our words of encouragement and by cultivating the habit of expositional listening.

Fifth, **expositional listening strengthens the gathered congregation in unity.** Repeatedly, the New Testament writers exhort local churches to be unified—to be of one mind. Paul writes to one local church, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (1 Cor 1:10; Rom 12:16; 2 Cor 13:11; 1 Pet 3:8). As we gather in our local churches and give ourselves to hearing the voice of God



through His preached Word, we are shaped into one committed and united body. We are united in understanding and purpose. And that unity testifies to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Jn 17:21). But if we are distracted or if we listen with our own interests and agendas in mind, if we develop “private interpretations” and idiosyncratic views, we risk shattering that unity, provoking disputes over doubtful matters, and weakening our corporate gospel witness in the local churches.

How Can Church Members Cultivate the Habit of Expositional Listening?

If expositional listening is so vital to the health of individual church members and the church as a whole, how can a worshipper form such a habit? Here are six practical ideas to foster more attentive and effective listening to God’s Word.



1) Meditate on the sermon passage during and after the Sabbath Service

It starts with a desire coupled with discipline. Several days before the sermon is preached, read the church weekly or ask the pastor what passage of Scripture he plans to preach the following Sunday. Encourage him by letting him know that you will be praying for his preparation and are preparing to listen to the sermon preached. Outline and read the text in your own daily devotions and use it to inform your prayer life. Learning to outline Scripture (and teach your children too) is a wonderful way of digging out and exposing the meaning of a passage. You can then use your outline as a listening aid; compare it to the preacher’s outline for new insights you missed in your own study and seek to apply the lessons learnt that day after service at home as well.

2) Invest in a Good Set of Sound Bible Commentaries and Books

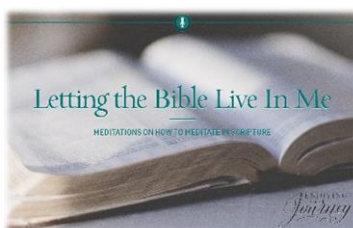
Add to your hearing of the Word and personal reflections some of the greatest minds in Christian history. Study the Bible with John Calvin Spurgeon or Martin Lloyd-Jones by purchasing commentaries on books of the Bible as you read and study through them. If your pastor is preaching through Joshua, pick up a good Reformed commentary on Joshua. Let these godly men and pastors help you hear God’s Word with a clear ear and discover its rich meaning. Also, you might want to purchase an Old Testament and New Testament commentary survey to help you sort through the range of commentary options available (Matthew Henry or Matthew Poole’s Commentary). Have a good resource or library in your home and grow to the knowledge of the Word. The better half of knowledge is knowing where to find it (the author has about 4,000 books in his home library and are still growing).

3) Talk and Pray with Friends about the Sermon After the Church Service

Instead of rushing off after the service is over, or talking about the latest news on social media, **develop the habit of talking about the sermon with people after church.** Start spiritual conversations by asking, “How did the Scripture challenge or manage or speak to you today?” Or, “What about God’s character that encouraged you in today’s sermon?” Encourage others and your family by sharing things you learned about God and his Word during the sermon. Make particular note of how your thinking has changed because of the meaning of Scripture itself. And pray with others that God would keep the congregation from becoming “dull of hearing” and that **He would bless the congregation with an increasingly strong desire for the “solid food” of His Word and not just milk which is for the younger believer** (Isa 6:9-10; Heb 5:11-14).

4) Listen Intently and Diligently Act on the Sermon Throughout the Week

We can cultivate the habit of expositional listening by listening to the sermon again throughout the week and then acting upon it. Do not let the Sunday sermon become a one-time event that fades from memory as soon as it is over and pass it on to someone (Jas 1:22–25). Choose one or two particular



applications from the Scripture and prayerfully put them into practice over the coming week. Our church has a video sermon ministry and a website that posts the sermons and church weekly bulletins (it is being listened to and read by some of our BPCs overseas). Take advantage of these opportunities to feed your soul with the click of a mouse. Establish small groups of Bible studies that review and apply the sermons. Or, use the sermon summary and your notes as a resource in one-on-one discipleship or relationships. I know of some families that have a regular sermon-review time as their Sunday evening family devotion with their children. There are different ways to keep the sermon alive in your spiritual life by reviewing God’s Word throughout the week. Be creative. It is well worth doing it for your soul and family sake.

5) Develop the Habit of Addressing Any Question about the Text Itself

Jonathan Edwards, the Great American Revivalist and Theologian, resolved that he would never let a day end before he had answered any question that came to mind while he was studying the Scripture. How healthy would our churches be if members dedicated themselves to studying the Scripture with that kind of intentional effort and resolve! Act 17:11 says of the Bereans, *‘These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.’* One

way to begin is to follow up with your pastor, elders, deacons or Sunday School teachers in the church about questions triggered by the text. Moreover, do not be passive in your private study; seek answers by searching the Scripture yourself and by talking with accountability partners or small groups. But do not forget that the pastor has likely spent more time than most in studying that passage and is there to feed you God's Word. Follow up the sermon with questions and comments that would be an encouragement and a blessing to your soul.

6) Cultivate a Teachable and Humble Frame of Mind

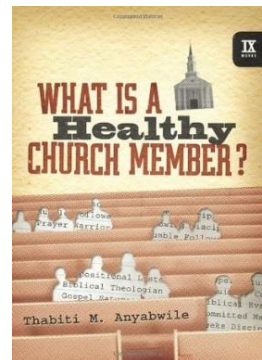
We need to train our minds. As you dig into God's Word and listen to the Word preached purposefully, you will no doubt begin to grow and discover many wonderful treasures. But as you grow, do not become a "professional sermon taster" who is always hearing but never learning. James 1:22 says, *'But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.'* Beware of false knowledge that "puffs up" (1 Cor 13:1-3; Col 2:18) and tends to cause strife and dissension. Mortify any tendency toward pride, the condemnation of God's servants and critical nit-picking. Instead, seek to meet Jesus each time you come to the Scripture; gather from the Word spirited fuel for an abundant life of service and worship. Let us remember the apostle Peter's words, *"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time"* (1 Pet 5:6). Heb 13:17 says, *'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.'*

Conclusion

Ignorance is not bliss and slothfulness is a curse. Hosea 4:6 says, *'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.'* It is important to know and live out the word of God. It is hearing the message and the Word of God that leads to saving faith (Rom 10:17). Church members and worshippers are healthy when they give themselves to hearing and applying God's message as a regular discipline. Expositional listening promotes spiritual health for individual members and the entire church as a whole. Let us do our part in listening well during services in building up the fear and knowledge of God in us and our families.

Jack Sin

(Adapted and expanded from Thabiti M Anyabwile, What is a Healthy Church Member? 2008.)



BIBLICAL PARADOXES OF LIFE EXPOUNDED

LORD'S DAY PROGRAM APR-JUN 2022

APRIL

[3] FINDING & LOSING ONE'S LIFE

MATTHEW 10:31-39

[10*] CHOSEN BY GOD & ABIDING

JOHN 15:1-16

Good Friday Service

[15] DIVINE SATISFACTION AT THE CROSS

JOHN 19:25-42

Easter Service

[17] OF DYING & YET LIVING

MATTHEW 28:1-10

[24] SORROWFUL YET REJOICING

2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-10

MAY

[1] POOR & YET RICH

MATTHEW 5:5, PHILIPPIANS 4:10-19

[8*] TEMPORAL & ETERNAL

1 JOHN 5:1-13

[15] STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10

[22] KNOWING THE LOVE OF CHRIST THAT SURPASSES KNOWLEDGE

EPHESIANS 3:11-19

[29] OF LIGHT & DARKNESS

2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-7

JUNE

[5] OF HOLINESS & WORLDLINESS

1 JOHN 2:15-21

[12*] OF PERPLEXITY & PEACE

2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-18

[19] SPIRIT OF TRUTH VS ERROR

1 JOHN 3:18-4:6

Gospel Sunday

[26] ENDLESS HOPE OR HOPELESS END?

ROMANS 5:1-11

SOVEREIGNHOPE
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An Outreach to Indian Migrant Workers - Seminar on "How to Cope with Stress" -

We thank God for a fruitful seminar conducted on the night of 26 March 2022 to about 80 Indian migrant workers from the Westlite dorm in Woodlands where Pastor Jack spoke on "How to Cope with Stress" with Elder Reuben as the Tamil interpreter. This was organised by Bro John Caleb, a final year ERBC student together with Pastor Rama and his team to reach out to the workers. There was good response with questions asked on how to deal with insomnia, how to respond when provoked and how to meditate. We shared practical insights on stress management also the need to seek the Gospel of Christ.



After the seminar, with the help of John Wong and Paul, we gave out Tamil gospel



tracts, Gideon Tamil New Testament, goodie bags (sponsored by one of our church members) and church calendar. Dinner packets were provided by Pastor Rama and his team. The participants enjoyed the seminar.



We have been asked to do a similar seminar to another group of workers in Telugu next month. We thank God for every opportunity to reach out. Do pray for wisdom for the ministry team and the saving of souls. There are many dorms with foreign workers here and they need Christ. May the Lord give us a burden for the awakening of souls in these last perilous days. (Matt 24:14)



Gospel Sunday 27 Mar 2022
"Probing Heaven and Hell"

Praise the Lord for 40 worshippers among which were some unbelievers. Bro John Caleb shared his testimony of salvation in Christ.

SOVEREIGNHOPE
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SHBPC
Good Friday and Easter Services

Good Friday

15 April 2022, 8:00 pm

Divine Satisfaction at the Cross

Easter Service

17 April 2022, 10:00 am

Of Dying and yet Living



by Rev Dr Jack Sin

Come and find out the meaning and impact of the death and resurrection of Christ

All are Welcome

Those interested to register with
Dn Yue Kay at 97450311 by 13 April 2022

Venue : Sovereign Hope BP Church
160, Paya Lebar Rd, Orion @ Paya lebar #04-06.
S(409022)

Memory Verse

Matt 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Pastor speaks today on "***Finding & Losing One's Life (Matt 10:31-39)***", starting a new quarterly series on "***Biblical Paradoxes of Life Expounded'***".
3. Pastor speaks next Sunday on "***Chosen by God & Abiding (John 15:1-16)***".
4. Sunday School classes continues after worship service:
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - Understanding Biblical Eschatology & related Topics – Joseph
 - Studies in Deuteronomy – Dn Kwong Leen
 - Burmese Bible Class - James
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. Included in the programme is a study on Church History in China on alternate Sundays. Join us for a time of profitable learning.
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church.
7. In accordance with the Vaccination-Differentiated Safe Management Measures (VDS) that is effective from 1Feb, our Sunday worship services are for vaccinated worshippers. The measures do not apply to religious classes ie. Sun School and Bible Study classes and hence all are welcome to attend.
8. **The Church camp will be from 16 -18 June at Changi Cove** on the theme "***Biblical Precepts for a Vibrant Christian Walk***" by Dr Jack Sin. Registration Forms are available from Dn Yue Kay and all are encouraged to register as soon as possible as there is a limited capacity.
9. Monthly Neighbourhood Bible Class will next meet on **Fri 6 May 2022, 7.30pm in church** on the study of 2 Samuel. Come and join us!
10. Those who wish to bring a new friend to the worship service, kindly inform the safety officer Dn Yue Kay or Pastor at least a day in advance.
11. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
12. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**
