

## Reclaiming the Publicness of Preaching and Homiletical Suggestions

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### 국문초록

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Since the 2000s, both the public credibility of the Korean church and the quantitative growth of the church have been steadily declining. Under these circumstances sermons in the Korean church still emphasize the daily and private lives of believers rather than addressing their responsibilities as saved people the role of the faith community in changing times. However, sermons inevitably public and address the responsibilities and missions in the public sphere that God has entrusted to believers and the church. This paper examine the reasons why the Korean church has lost the public nature of preaching and discuss the urgency of restoring the public nature of preaching. In addition, will discuss the priority of establishing the identity of believers and the church as a way to restore the publicity of preaching, and propose a sermon based on the narrative of redemptive history as a homiletical alternative for establishing the identity of believers and the church.

Topics: publicness, privatization of preaching, dualism, pragmatism, identity, narrative, redemptive narrative

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## I. What to say

Since the 2000s, both the public trust in the Korean church and the quantitative growth of the church have been on a steady downward trend. According to the 2017 Social Trust in the Korean Church survey conducted by the Christian Ethical Action Movement 20.2 percent of people said they trusted the Korean church, while 51.2 percent said they did not trust the Korean church.<sup>1)</sup> The 2022 Religious Perception Survey ~~conducted~~ by Korea Research shows that the only Protestant church is experiencing an exodus of Protestants exceeding 10 percent. Between 2021 and 2022, 12% of Protestants said they have no current religious affiliation, and 1% said they switched to another religion. In one year 13% of Protestants left the church. This compares to 8% of Catholics and 9% of Buddhists.<sup>2)</sup> As such, the South Korean church has been declining or stagnating since the 2000s. These statistics clearly show the reality of the Protestant church.

The portrayal of Christians in recent popular television dramas is also a stark reminder of how Christians and the church are viewed by society. The villains, or bad guys, in the most popular dramas have one thing in common they are all Christians. For example, the Netflix drama "Mask Girl," Joo's mother, Kim, is a church who is more than anyone else. But in reality, she's an extremely evil person, full of hypocrisy and pretense. She plans to take revenge by murdering her son's mistress, Gong, and commits the crime, saying "Load, Amen" "the while. Not only that

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1) "2017 Korean Church Social Trust Survey Results Presentation Seminar" (March 3, 2017): 14.

2) Korea Research, <https://hrcopinion.co.kr>, accessed September 22, 2023.

Other popular dramas such as 'La', 'The Squid Game', 'Hell', 'Douglas', and 'D.P.2'.

<sup>3)</sup> This reality reflects the fact Christians are discredited and criticized in society. However, despite this situation, sermons in Korean churches still often focus on individual salvation and religious behavior. Rather than addressing the responsibilities of the saved, the role of the faith community in changing times, sermons emphasize the daily and private lives of individual believers. In short, sermon has lost its public character. In this paper, we will examine the reasons for the loss of publicity in the Korean church and discuss the urgency of regaining publicity in preaching. We will also discuss the need to establish the identity of the believer and the church as a way to restore publicity to preaching, and propose preaching the redemptive narrative as an alternative to establishing identity.

## II. Expanding Posts

### 1. 설교의 공공성

One of the most discussed and connected concepts of the 20th century is that of "publicness."<sup>(4)</sup> The term publicness, as it is commonly understood, encompasses the meaning of "public" and the meaning of "common."<sup>(5)</sup> It is a term that has been used to describe both

3) &cp=nvhttps://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0924299461&code=23111411, accessed September 22, 2023.

4) The concept publicness has been around since Stanley I. Benn and Gerald Gaus' 1983

The concept was codified in the 1968 book *Public and private in social life*, but in modern times, each

<sup>5)</sup> However according to David Hollenbach, publicness is not limited to the moral and social dimensions of the state, government, and society, but also <sup>includes</sup> the religious, , and relational dimensions<sup>(6)</sup>) In this sense, church can be said to have The church concerned with the public realm beyond the confines of the church. A theology that began with an interest in the public nature of the church is called "public theology. Public theology is a theology that goes beyond the confines of the church and engages the public sphere. Of course, it is not easy to define public theology in a single word. The scope and content of public theology vary depending on the theological position and interpretation. Lee emphasizes that a proper understanding of general grace is important to discuss public theology, and argues that it can be divided into sound public theology and undesirable public theology depending on the understanding of general grace. According to Lee, a sound public theology fulfills the following five characteristics. First, it does not abandon Christian truth. Second, it avoids universal soteriological implications. Third, it does not go in the direction of universalism. Fourth, it does not reduce God to mere symbols, concepts, and metaphors or abandon the triune God. Fifth, it does not claim that all of the world's problems can be solved by human power.<sup>7)</sup>

The ministry that has the most impact on a church's public presence is the preaching ministry.

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It is defined differently in different fields. As such, it is not easy to give a specific definition of publicness. Benn Stanley & Gerald Gaus, *Public and private in social life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

- 5) Raymond Geuss, *Public Goods, Private Goods* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 42-43.
- 6) David Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3-31.
- 7) Seung-Koo Lee, "General Grace as a Foundation for Sound Public Theology," in *Proceedings of the 44th Annual Conference of the Korean Society of Evangelical Organized Theology*, 2023: 8-10.

C. While there are many ministries of the church that relate to the public sphere, the of preaching is the ministry of teaching the community of faith about its God-given public role and, in turn, its public mission. In that sense, preaching is inevitably public. Preaching does not stop at the faith development of individuals and communities of faith as members of God's kingdom. , it has the purpose of a right relationship with the world (society) in which they live and leading them to their role , that the glory of God may be revealed both within and the church. Therefore the preacher must address the public sphere so that the church and Christians can fulfill the public mission in the world that God has entrusted to them.<sup>8)</sup>

## 2. 설교의 공공성 상실의 원인

A closer look at sermons in the Korean church today reveals that sermons have lost their public character and are often focused solely on private matters such as personal salvation and faith. In this study, we first look at the reasons why the Korean church has lost its public character.

### 1) Sermonization

The first cause of the loss of publicity of preaching in the Korean church is the privatization of preaching. Lee explains the privatization of preaching as follows:<sup>9)</sup>

8) Hyunchul Oh, "Changes in Preaching in the New Normal Era," Korean Society of Evangelical Practical Theology, "Gospel and Practical Theology," 57 (November 2020): 134.

9) Lee, Seung-jin, "Sociologization and Community-Oriented Preaching in the Korean Church," The Korean Society of Evangelical Theology, Theology of Sacred History 67 (2013): 51-52.

The privatization of preaching refers to the fact that the influence of the preaching act and the event of preaching communication is not limited to the issue of one individual's choice of consumption, and does not lead to the formation of an alternative community that is different from the general society and the transformation of the general society through it, but merely to the selection of one more effective persuasive structure and one more effective psychological mechanism to resolve the psychological conflict that occurs in the private sphere of one individual.

The personalization of preaching that the message of the sermon remains in the personal sphere. In this regard, Michael Quicke defines the personalization of preaching as another for argues that today's on individual problems and , that bias is the most serious with modern preaching.<sup>(10)</sup>

<sup>11</sup>These discussions reveal that today's churches are inundated with sermons that emphasize Christology or Byrne spirituality, sermons that emphasize psychological comfort or entertainment, sermons that focus on short-term emotional uplift, and sermons that conform to secular values.

The biggest problem with privatizing the sermon we cannot expect maturity and change in the community as a whole, ethics, or social responsibility from individual believers. History of preaching

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10) Michael J. Quicke, *360-degree Leadership: Preaching to Transform Congregations*,

Lee, Seung Jin Lee, *Frontline Leadership: Leadership Sermons that Transform Congregations* (Seoul: CLC, 2009), 49.

11) Stanley M. Hauerwas & William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989); Walter Brueggemann, *Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and the Postmodern Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Davis F. Wells, *No Place for Truth: Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Theology Lost: Rescuing Secularized Evangelicalism) (Seoul: Revival and Reformation History, 2006).

Sahwa makes the goal of preaching the intellectual understanding and inner decision of individual believers. In this respect, individualistic preaching inevitably keeps the message within the realm of the hearer's existential concerns or personal faith and neglects to preach to the hearer's collective response and decision as the people of God. The privatization of the sermon reduces the authority of the message to a matter of individual choice, without concern for how the community of faith is to live out its role as the holy community of God in the midst of society. In the end, the privatization of preaching to the neglect of the horizontal responsibilities and activities of the community as light and salt (Matt. 5:13-16) and produces a faith that prioritizes the individual or the particular community.<sup>12)</sup>

## 2) Sermons based on dualism

The second cause of the loss of publicity in Korean churches today preaching based on dualism. Dualism refers to the idea that the world is made up of two separate and disparate fundamental principles that are independent of each other. Some of the most common examples of dualism in the Christian faith are soul and body, evangelism and social engagement, church and world, Bible and scholarship, and church service and social action.<sup>13)</sup>

Dualistic sermons relegate the world's politics, science, economics, culture, to vulgarity. Dualistic sermons emphasize that anything outside the church is evil, and that things related to faith and church service are holy.

12) Lee, Seungjin, "A Study on Preaching Methods for Revitalizing Faith Communities," *Gospel and Practical Theology* 21 (2010): 104; Quicke, *360-degree Leadership*, 50.

13) Song, Inkyu, *Is This Sinful World Enough: The Urgency of Establishing a Christian Worldview* (Seoul: Hankook Christian Student Publishing House, 1984), 11.

<sup>14</sup>For example, it is preaching a narrow gospel that emphasizes the vertical aspects of faith while the horizontal areas of God's people's lives.<sup>(15)</sup>For example, it is preaching that engaging in so-called spiritual ministry, such as being a pastor or missionary, is holy and good, but that pursuing a normal job is inherently less valuable than engaging in spiritual ministry. You might also preach that participating in worship or church service is inherently holy and good, but that caring for the home or engaging in business is inherently less valuable than worship or church service.

However, the Bible teaches that for Christians who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, not just certain jobs, activities, spaces, and times are holy, but all jobs, activities, all spaces, and all times are holy. In that regard, the Apostle teaches whatever a, do it to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Thus, dualistic preaching flies in the face of biblical teaching. The effect of dualistic preaching is that believers see worship, activity, and commitment as the top priorities of their faith life, and the church sees growth, revival, and experience as the top priorities of the faith community. As a result, dualistic preaching cannot expect maturity, transformation, and social responsibility from believers and churches.

### 3) Preaching based on pragmatism

A third cause of the loss of publicness in Korean churches today the preaching that emphasizes pragmatism. From to postmodernism

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14) Do-Hwa Heo, "Dialogue between Preaching and Culture: The Preacher's Understanding of the Gospel for the 21st Century," *Papers of the Korean Society for Cultural Theology* 3(1999): 97-104.



, feeling the pinch of the paradigm shift the future, of the techniques of the world into the church which is pragmatism. Pragmatism is a philosophical tradition that evaluates the value of beliefs according to their practical consequences.<sup>(15)</sup> With the industrial revolution and the development of technology, there was a growing emphasis on efficiency in all areas of life, which led to the rise of pragmatism, which emphasizes present utility over intrinsic value. Utilitarianism is characterized by the that a or process is useful if it produces desired effect, and unnecessary if it does.<sup>(16)</sup>

Of course, pragmatism is not a bad philosophy in itself, but when it becomes a guide or philosophy for preachers, it inevitably conflicts with biblical values. Pragmatism holds that in order for the gospel to be recognized as true, belief in Jesus must bring tangible benefits to humans, such as vitality, courage, happiness, comfort, satisfaction, healing, etc. Pragmatism can reduce the primary purpose of the gospel to merely entertaining people and providing them with secrets to success and pop psychotherapy.<sup>(17)</sup>

Pragmatist-influenced preaching naturally moves from God-centered preaching to man-centered preaching, and the authority of God's Word is lost. Gary E. Gilley criticizes pragmatism-based preaching as merely preaching "a gospel that meets the needs of the customer."<sup>(18)</sup> Michael S. Horton also criticizes Christianity's pragmatic foundation.

15) Kelly James Clark, Richard Lints & James K. A. Smith, *101 Key Terms in Philosophy and Their Importance for Theology*, translated by Kim Ji-ho Kim, 101 Philosophical Concepts for Studying Theology (Goyang: Book Publishing 100, 2017) 98.

16) Park, Soon-Yong, "Christianity Falls into the Trap of the World" (Seoul: Revival and Reformation History, 2009), 140.

17) Park, Soon-Yong, "Christianity Falls into the Trap of the World," 141.

18) Gary E. Gilley, *This Little Church Stayed Home: A Faithful Church in Deceptive Times*, by Se-Min Kim, "Postmodern Mysticism and the Challenge of the Emerging Church" (Seoul: Revival and Reformation History, 2011) 59.

He warns that if this is the case, preaching will become nothing more than one of the world's many programs. A sermon that has fallen into pragmatism will no longer be able to point out sin, preach the lordship of Jesus Christ, the judgment of sin and righteousness, Christian identity, the quality of the church, or even the responsibilities and roles of the church and believers.<sup>19)</sup>

### 3. 설교의 공공성 회복의 당위성

So why should sermons be made public again? In this , we'll explore the rationale for making sermons public again.

#### 1) Biblical basis: publicness implied in the Bible

The publicness of preaching must be restored because the Bible itself is public.<sup>20)</sup> The publicness implicit in the Bible can be traced to God's work of creation. God created man in the image of God and gave him dominion over all the world on behalf of God.<sup>21)</sup> God then the , emphasizes that God's are to live as a holy , in the public sphere. Through the law, God wants to govern the realm of justice as the kingdom of God, which is full of righteousness, justice, and mercy. The books of Psalms and Wisdom are not only religious and ethical, but also social and

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19) Michael S. Horton, *Made in America: The Shaping of Modern American Evangelicalism*, translated by Jae Young Kim (Seoul: Compass, 2001), 102.

20) SFC, "How Preach the Publicness of the Church" (Seoul: SFC, 2023), 27-32.

21) Kang emphasizes the fact that regardless of human depravity, the vicarious rule of the image of God is still in effect. Kang, "The Publicness of the Church in the Pentateuch: God's Creation and Publicness," in *How to Preach the Publicness of the Church*, 39-44.

It involves public aspects. The prophets, on the other hand, emphasize God's restoration of justice and righteousness in the public sphere. The prophets called out to the people of Israel to restore the broken public sphere and realize justice and righteousness. God wanted Israel to be a nation where justice flowed like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing river (Amos 5:24).

The public nature of the Bible becomes even more evident in the New Testament through the central theme of the Bible: the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God means the direct rule of God and it is at the heart of the gospel that Jesus came to earth to proclaim and teach. As Jesus expanded the kingdom of God into the public sphere, he emphasized the "omnipresence" of the gospel. The book of Acts introduces the church as the vehicle for extending the kingdom of God on earth. The epistles teach in detail how the church is to exercise its public ministry. Finally, Revelation describes how God's final judgment and recreation will take place in the public sphere.

Therefore, if a preacher ignores the public nature of the Bible and limits the sermon to the private sphere, the sermon is a half-hearted sermon that fails to fully express the public nature of the Bible. Therefore, to restore publicness to the sermon, the preacher be able to interpret and apply the message to the public sphere.

## 2) Theological Basis: Reformed Ideas of God's Sovereignty

The central and most basic idea of Reformed theology is the idea of God's sovereignty. The Trinitarian God "the supreme Lord and King of all the world."<sup>(22)</sup> Reformed theology emphasizes that God is sovereign over all things.

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22) *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 23:1.

It does not leave the enemy to his own devices and teach only an afterlife faith in Jesus that saves. Reformed theology asserts the total sovereignty of God as the all-encompassing principle of life and emphasizes the role of Christians and the church in fulfilling God's reign in both the private and public spheres in accordance with God's Word. In this respect, Reformed theology rejects as unbiblical the dualization of the world into "holy" and "secular" and the religious hermetism or escapism that seeks to escape from the world.

Nevertheless, Reformed theology in the Korean church tended to remain either a theology of life and vantage point, or it has focused on ministries within the church, such as the old order and office bearers. As Richard A. Lischer has pointed out, today's preachers are failing to embody their theology at both the individual and community levels.<sup>(23)</sup> It is that Reformed-based preaching is often limited to the soteriological realm of personal piety. Of course, it is natural to teach and emphasize the importance of soul salvation and the need for a right godly life based on Reformed theology. However, when the message and application of the sermon remains within the confines of personal piety and the church, the sovereign theology of God that is the legacy of Reformed theology bound to fade away.

Therefore, in order to restore the idea of God's sovereignty, it is necessary to restore the public character of preaching. The idea of God's sovereignty in Reformed theology is a core message to be proclaimed and taught in preaching, and recognizing this, the preacher must expand the horizons of preaching from the private sphere to the public sphere. The idea of God's sovereignty in all spheres, especially in the public sphere, is still

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23) Richard Lischer, *A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamics of the Gospel* (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth, 1992), x.

It is one theological task of the to reveal and teach what must be realized, and through preaching the preacher must present to individuals and faith communities their responsibilities and roles in the public sphere.

### 3) The need of the hour

In the era of postmodernism, various worldviews and ideologies coexist, and no one worldview or ideology is accepted as absolute. This relativistic characteristic of postmodernism has also affected the role of religion in people and society, and religion has increasingly removed from the public sphere and relegated to the private sphere of individuals. As Moon points out:<sup>24)</sup>

Religion has been privatized, withdrawing from the public sphere and retreating into the private sphere of individuals. Churches now tend approach faith as a therapy to make people happy and healthy, rather than as a way to connect them to society. Withdrawn into the private sphere, the church has become individualistic, the object of choice for individuals and nuclear families. The church no longer able to fulfill its traditional task, that is, to give ultimate meaning to all social life by binding all people and thus constituting a common world. The church has become in the public sphere. Moreover, the secularization, relativistic worldview, and state-centrism of the postmodern era not like the church to perform public functions and thus push it out of the public sphere.

### But Times Change, God's Public Mission for Faith Communities

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24) Senthwan, "Reasons to Study the Public Life of the Church," in *How to Preach the Public Life of the Church* 24.

is not going away. The church still the great task of bringing about the kingdom of God in this world. The church defend and carry on the public mission God has given it, regardless of the passage of time. In particular, the church use preaching to reaffirm the public mission entrusted to it and to build the kingdom of God in the world. Preachers should recognize the importance of the public mission God has given to the community of faith and offer concrete biblical principles and practical ways to build the kingdom of God through preaching. When preaching is reclaimed as public, the church will be better equipped to fulfill its public mission, regardless of the changes and challenges of the times.

#### **4. A Homiletic Approach to Restoring the Public Nature of Preaching**

In this paper, will propose the establishment of identity through redemptive narrative preaching as a way to restore the publicness of preaching.

##### **1) Establishing identity through preaching**

The church is not concerned with any principles or moral obligations regarding actions, but rather with the 'self' that produces those actions.<sup>25</sup> The 'doing' of the believer and the church is based on having a right identity of one's "being," and when the believer and the church have a right identity of their , their actions have validity. In order for the Church and its members to be set apart in the world, the

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25) Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 113.

What is needed a clear teaching of the identity of the Church as a community set apart from the world and of the saints as beings set apart from the world. The right identity gives us sense of the meaning of existence and a clear indication of the direction and purpose of our lives.<sup>26)</sup>

However, the identity of the believer and the church is established through the Word of God. Believers and the Church establish their biblical and theological identity through the Word of God. Through God's Word, believers and the church identify what it means to live in the world as God's people and their role and mission in the world. This can be seen in church history. Recognizing the importance of establishing its identity through God's Word, the church has historically used the Word to examine and restore its identity in times of crisis. For example, the Reformers insisted on "Sola Scriptura," emphasizing that only the Bible is inerrant and can be the standard of faith and doctrine, and they called for the reformation and rebuilding of the church based on the Bible.

Preaching is the most important ministry of the Word that establishes personal and church identity. As Donald R. Sunukjian emphasizes, preaching is not simply the transmission of knowledge. It influences and transforms behavior.<sup>27)</sup> Preaching is a ministry that establishes the identity of believers and the church through God's Word, and it also provides effective answers to the roles and responsibilities of individuals and the church in the public sphere. Preaching helps believers and the church establish a right relationship with the world and their rightful role in it.

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26) Changhoon Kim, "Preaching on Social Issues, What Do?", *Gospel and Practical Theology* 31 (2014):

56.

27) Donald R. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance*, translated by Kyung Rak Chae (Seoul: CLC, 2009) 15.

<sup>28</sup>In this regard, Kim emphasizes the importance of establishing the identity of the believer and the church.<sup>29)</sup>

While the identity of the church and its members must be emphasized in preaching, it is even more necessary and important to emphasize the identity of the church and its members as the people of God set apart from the world in order to fulfill its social mission in the world correctly and fully.

## 2) Redemptive narrative-based preaching

Narrative theologian George Stroup argues that the of individuals and communities is through <sup>30)</sup>The "unique identity" individuals and communities is formed by mere or the "distinct narratives" individuals and have Stanley M. Hauerwas emphasizes that humans are narrative beings who use narrative to interpret and make meaning of past events and their surroundings in the present, and to prepare for the future.<sup>31)</sup>

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28) Chung Chang-Kyun, "Sermons Answering Social Suffering," "Hermeneia Today," 53 (2012): 6.

29) Kim, Changhoon, "Preaching on Social Issues, How Do It?," 57.

30) George W. Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology: Recovering the Gospel in the Church* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 91-95.

31) Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1985); Stephen D. Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 39 (1971).

32) Stanley M. Hauerwas, *The Hauerwas Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 166.



This paper proposes preaching based on the redemptive narrative as a narrative for establishing the identity of believers and the church. The redemptive is the one grand narrative by the God as revealed in the Old and New themselves.<sup>(33)</sup> The redemptive has its center the crucifixion resurrection of Jesus Christ, which drives the half of the the half of the narrative. God humanity in the image of God, but humanity was sin and, as a result, completely cut off from God. As man grew further and further from God, the served to further man's impossibility, that is, 's inability to himself. But to save , God's only begotten , Jesus Christ, into the world, took upon Himself sins of mankind, and died a death. Jesus Christ broke the power of death and rose from the dead on the third day. After his ascension, Jesus Christ sent God the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to his people. Through the saving work of God the Holy Spirit, believers have become new creatures in God. Furthermore, Christians and the church have not only been saved, but now, based on God's saving grace, they live as light and salt in the world in which they live. A new possibility has opened up for human beings to be saved and to live as God's people. And in the fullness of time, Jesus Christ will return to restore this world to its fullness.

But there is something unique about this redemptive narrative. It that the redemptive ~~and~~ is "holistic". The Bible tells the story of God's redemptive work

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33) Lee, Seungjin, "A Study of Preaching Ministry that Embodies the Redemptive Narrative," Gospel and Practical Theology 43 (2017). pp: 93-94.

It is clear this work of God is not limited to saving human beings but also includes God's redemption and perfection of this fallen world. For example, various Old Testament institutions command us to care for the orphan, the widow, the poor, and the stranger, and to show love and mercy in the public sphere as God's people. The holistic nature of the work of redemption is found even more clearly in the New Testament in the ministry and words of Jesus Christ. The centerpiece of Jesus Christ's ministry and words was the "kingdom of God," and the of is, global, all areas of human life. Thus, the redemptive narrative is a vision of 'total salvation' that is not only personal and spiritual, but also communal, social, and even global, encompassing the entire world and the entire universe.

In this sense, preaching from the redemptive narrative is not a matter of choosing between soul salvation and social engagement, but rather involves both. Christopher J. H. Wright emphasizes God's redemptive event the driving force behind Israel's ethical practices. Based on the memory and retelling of God's redemptive event and the expectations for the future based on that redemptive event, Israel was able to assume the role of a holy community of faith in the public sphere.<sup>34</sup> Of course, Wright's argument is not limited to the past but be applied to communities of faith today. God's redemptive narrative continues to motivate God's to carry out practices. When a preacher consistently preaches about the redemptive narrative of God's work in Israel's history, that redemptive narrative transcends the limits of time and becomes present in the lives of today's listeners, providing them with a

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34) Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, trans. by Jae Young Kim,

"Old Testament Ethics for the Modern Age (Seoul: IVP, 2006) 30-42.

It gives them a sense of identity as God's people and helps them move toward obedience and practice of God's Word.

### 3) Preaching with the direct and imperative voice

In his epistles, does not stop at describing God's through the unique structure of indicative and imperative in redemptive, but commands to live holy lives as the of God's kingdom on the of grace. Having been saved through the gospel, believers and the church have been reconciled to God as new creatures (a change of being and identity). With their new identity, they now live out their roles as light and salt in the public sphere (good works as a fitting response to grace). John V. Fesko to this redemptive narrative-based structure of the imperative and the imperative as "the grammar of salvation."<sup>(35)</sup> Horton, too, the of 's and emphasizes that the today is follow the imperative (the command to in a that does not contradict the fact of based on the imperative (declaration that one is already in Christ). Horton argues that every true believer should have both.<sup>(36)</sup> The imperative without the exhortation is dangerous because it can lead the hearer into legalism<sup>(37)</sup> Herman N. Ridderbos argues that the always follows the exhortation in a concluding manner.

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35) John V. Fesko, "Preaching as a Means of Grace and the Doctrine of Sanctification: A Reformed Perspective," *American Theological Inquiry*, Vol. 3 (2010, Jan): 49.

36) Michael S. Horton, *Where in the World is the Church? A Christian View of Culture and Your Role in It*, by Seokin Yoon, *The Reformed Christian Worldview* (Seoul: Revival and Reformation History, 2010) 264.

37) Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*

(Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 268.

Emphasize this order is not <sup>(38)</sup>

This direct and imperative sermon structure be a good way to restore publicness to preaching because it does not require a forced discussion of the public sphere, but naturally emphasizes the responsibility and role of the hearer in the public sphere. Therefore, this will propose a sermon based on the redemptive narrative that utilizes this direct and imperative structure. First, the preacher proclaim the redemptive work of the Trinitarian God, reaffirming the hearers' recognition of God as sovereign over all things in the universe and affirming their need to live as covenant people in the public sphere. Through interpretation, the preacher affirms to the hearers how God intervenes and works in the text, in the lives of individuals, in the community of faith, and in the affairs of the world<sup>(39)</sup> In this regard, Paul Scott Wilson that God's action can be in every biblical text, and he emphasizes that the preacher must be trained to God's grace in the text and to God's <sup>(40)</sup>

The preacher's next task is to give the audience a relevant application based on the message. Application is necessary God's redemptive narrative is present tense, not past tense. To preach the redemptive narrative is not simply to describe a redemptive event recorded in the past, but recognize that the redemptive narrative is still being fulfilled in the context of the hearer's life today, and to offer application to the hearer in order to elicit an appropriate response as God's people. So what do we learn from the text?

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38) Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, Trans. J. R. De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 254.

39) Paul S. Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 158-61.

Should you prepare to apply, and what you apply?

First, application requires a proper interpretation of the text to determine the author's intent. Without a proper grasp of the author's intent, the application itself is an illegitimate attempt, even if the application is relevant to our lives.<sup>(40)</sup> The preacher discover the author's intent as revealed in the text through historical, cultural, and theological interpretation. An application that is not based on a correct interpretation of the text is merely the word of man, far from the word of God.<sup>(41)</sup> Second, audience analysis is necessary for proper application. Through audience analysis, the preacher can provide relevant, biblical answers for their *sitz im leben* (place in life). As Stott emphasizes, the preacher needs to be able to double-listen to the text and to the audience.<sup>(42)</sup> If the preacher has a clear analysis and understanding of his audience, he will be able to more effectively discover and present their responsibilities and roles in the public sphere.

Third, the form of application must be determined. A preacher can present biblical principles of life to his audience with general application, or, when necessary, he use narrowly focused specific applications that provide very specific ways of living.<sup>(43)</sup> However, in sensitive societies

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40) Jay E. Adams, *Preaching with purpose: The Urgent Task of Homiletics* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1982), 27; Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and The Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 106-07.

41) Dan G. McCartney & Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*, translated by Dong Soo Kim (Seoul: IVP, 2000), 40.

42) John R. W. Stott, *The contemporary Christian: Applying God's Word to Today's World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992), 13.

43) Kwon, Ho, "Text-Centered Meditation on the Word: Breaking Free from Self-Centered Misreading" (Seoul: Duranno, 2022),

81-82.

It is not advisable to be overly specific about enemy issues or political matters. Preaching incorrectly on controversial topics can cause division in the church and undermine the preacher's authority. To avoid such controversy, the preacher should have a near-expert understanding of the public sphere and trained to view issues related to the public sphere from a biblical and theological perspective.<sup>44)</sup>

#### 4) Be careful when preaching in the public sphere

Before preaching in the public sphere, there are a things to keep in mind. First, the preacher should avoid interpreting or applying the text based on his or her own "preunderstanding."<sup>45)</sup> All preachers should be careful not to base their interpretation or application on preconceived notions.<sup>45)</sup> All preachers approach the public sphere with a preconceived notion of what they believe.<sup>46)</sup> In this regard, "tabula rasa" (an untainted blank slate) is not possible in sermon. What preachers need to guard against is not placing themselves under the authority of God's Word, but rather an attitude of trying to decide for themselves what the Word means based on their own good understanding. Kevin J. Vanhoozer warns that it is pride to think that one's preconceived understanding is always correct, and he to this behavior as "going too far past the mark" (overstanding).<sup>46)</sup> Therefore, when preaching in the public sphere, preachers be careful not to interpret texts or offer applications based on their own theological positions, ideologies, or political leanings. Not a single member of the community

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44) Kim, Changhoon, "Preaching on Social Issues, What Do?"; 64.

45) Grant R. Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, translated by Yohan Lim (Seoul: Revival and Reformation History, 2017), 25.

46) Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is there a meaning in this text? : the Bible, the reader, and the morality of literary knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 402-03, 462.

We cannot have absolutely identical positions on certain public matters. The goal of preaching is not to place good understanding above the text, but to place the text above good understanding.<sup>47)</sup>

Second, preachers should avoid posting controversial or consistently biased positions on public issues in online communities such as social networking services (SNS) or church websites. Of course, a preacher's personal freedom and opinions are important and be respected. At the same time, however, a preacher is a public figure representing the church, and expressing his or her views too publicly before a sermon can cause division in the church or severe difficulties in the preacher's relationship with the audience. In such cases, no matter how well the preacher prepares the sermon, the audience likely to perceive the sermon as a political sermon in which the preacher's partisan views are conveyed.

Third, we seek the grace of the Holy Spirit. The natural man under sin blind unless he is illuminated by the Spirit of God.<sup>48)</sup> Especially preaching in the public sphere, the most important thing for a preacher to seek the guidance and filling of the Holy Spirit. To preach wisely in the public sphere, a preacher's whole person and life must be completely captivated by the Holy Spirit. When a preacher prepares his sermons in the grace of the Holy Spirit, they will be, in the words of Lloyd-Jones, "logic on fire" and will impact individuals and churches.

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47) Scott Duvall & Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, translated by Ho-Young Ryu (Seoul: Bible Union, 2017), 137-38.

48) John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.2.19.

### III. Outgoingposts

This paper discusses the reclaiming of preaching as public. God still uses the preaching ministry today to nurture Christians who will serve as the light and salt of the world and to build a community of faith that embodies God's will. In order to build such Christians and faith communities, it is important to establish the identity of believers and the church correctly. I have proposed preaching based on God's salvation narrative as a way to establish the identity of believers and the church. Specifically, I have proposed preaching the old genitive narrative through the structure of the imperative and the imperative. This redemptive narrative preaching based on the direct and imperative method will instill a biblical identity in believers and the church and build a community of faith that will embody the reign of God in the world. Hopefully, the sermons of the Korean church will be reclaimed as public and established as a community of praxis that will re-lighten this dark society.



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[Abstract].

## Homiletical suggestions for the recovery of the sermon's public nature

Seo, Jima

Since the 2000s, both the social credibility of Korean churches and the quantitative growth of churches have been on a steady decline. Even in this situation, the sermons of the Korean churches only emphasize the private realm of individual believers and the church rather than focusing attention on the responsibilities of those who have been saved and the role of the faith community with the changes of the times. However, preaching does not remain only in the private realm, but inevitably has a public nature, and must deal with the public realm so that believers and churches carry out the mission in the world entrusted to them by God. In order for believers and churches to restore and grow social credibility, the sermon's public nature must be recovered. In this paper, the researcher will examine the reasons why the Korean churches has lost the sermon's public nature and discuss the legitimacy of the recovery of it. In addition, the paper will discuss that establishing the identity of believers and the church is the top priority as a way to recover the sermon's public nature, and to propose the sermon on the narrative of redemptive history as an alternative to establishing the identity of believers and the church.

**Key Words :** the public nature of the sermon, privatization of preaching, dualism, pragmatism, identity, narrative, narrative of redemptive history