

CH 263 Preaching the Gospels **Summer Term, 2008**

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office hours: usually after class, M-Th, for an hour

Course Description: In this course we will practice hearing the Gospel stories with “first-century ears.” We will give particular attention to the problem of anti-Judaism and Christian supersessionism in interpreting the Gospels. We will explore different ways of moving from text to sermon and other ministry contexts for interpreting the Gospels.

Pre requisite: CH 261 or permission of instructor

Course Objectives:

1. to appreciate the relationship between texts and contexts in the interpretation of the Gospels
2. to learn to see and hear the “preaching and teaching of contempt” through deeply-ingrained Christian stereotypes of Jews and Judaism
3. to develop critical skills for using resources for biblical preaching
4. to practice different ways of interpreting the Gospels, especially for preaching

Course Requirements:

1. Come to each class meeting on time and participate in class discussions and small groups. Please let me know if you will be absent.
2. Complete daily assignments.
3. The final project is due on June 20th, one week after our last class meeting. A hard copy must be in my mailbox on that day or postmarked that day. According to policy, no extensions will be given unless arranged for by the last day of class (6/16). See the policy on extensions on the last page of the syllabus.

Evaluations and Grades: Your grade for the course will be based on the satisfactory completion of daily assignments and the final project. Written work will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: addresses the questions asked; shows careful and critical reading of the texts; shows understanding of context; depth of insight; communication skills, including spelling, punctuation, organization, proper footnotes where required.

Policies: See the end of the syllabus.

Required Books:

NRSV Bible, HarperCollins preferred, Revised Oxford Annotated also okay
NRSV Gospel Parallels: Throckmorton, editor, Nelson Publishing
Salmon, *Preaching without Contempt: Overcoming Unintended Anti-Judaism*,

Supplementary:

Boys, Mary C., *Has God Only One Blessing?*
Schotroff, Luise, *The Parables of Jesus*

Schedule of Assignments

June 2 Reflections on Biblical Preaching; Introduction

For Discussion:

1. As a listener, what are your criteria for a good sermon?
2. When a sermon disappoints you, what are your main criticisms?
3. As a preacher, what is the aim/purpose of a good sermon? What do you hope to accomplish through a sermon?
4. When preaching from a biblical text, how does the text inform your sermon?
5. What inspired, challenged, and/or provoked insights or questions from the readings?
6. What are your expectations or hopes for this class?

Note: If you have no experience as a preacher, then imagine yourself as one, or consider the questions from the perspective of a listener.

June 2 Reading Contexts

Read: Salmon, *Preaching without Contempt*, Preface, Chapters 1-2
Schotroff, *The Parables of Jesus*, 81-89
Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing?*, 5-85

Write: The chapter "The Gospels as Jewish Literature" identifies three definers of early Judaism. In the following texts, what evidence do you see that indicate Jewish identity, such as concern for Torah observance, or the authority of the scriptures (our Older Testament), or covenant relationship? Write a few sentences on each one.

Luke 1:39-56; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 16:19-31; Matthew 23
Matthew 18:15-20; Luke 6:1-11

Write: Boys describes the conventional account of Christian origins and its implications with respect to its portrayal of Judaism (77-82). Choose a couple of the "Corollaries" (p.77) and discuss how the alternative account of Christian origins (83-85) addresses the problem.

June 4 The Pharisees and the Law

Read: *Preaching without Contempt*, chapter three
Has God Only One Blessing?, 91-110

Write: Choose one of the following texts; consult two or three sermon resources (on-line or print) on selected text. How do they treat the Pharisees? What do they say? Do you see any of the stereotypes discussed in the chapter on the Pharisees? Any supersessionist themes? What assumptions does the preacher or resource contributor make, about context, about the Pharisees, about Judaism, about Jesus? Write about a page (250 words), including quotes and documentation of your source.

RCL Year C, Luke 14:1, 7-14 (Pentecost 16, Proper 17)

RCL Year B Mark 10:2-16 (Pentecost 21, Proper 22)

June 5 The Jews and the Gospel of John

Read: *Preaching without Contempt*, chapter four
New Proclamation for Year C, 2007, 248-275 (on reserve)

Recommended: Raymond Brown, article on the world of John for preachers,
Interpretation

Write: Choose one of the following texts and consult two or three sermon resources. What do they say about the Jews in John? What is the understanding of Jews, the context of the Gospel writer, Jesus, or Christianity reflected in the resources? How is it like or not like the perspective presented in the assigned reading for class? Do you see evidence of supersessionism?

RCL, Year A, John 9:1-41 (4th Sunday in Lent)

RCL, John 12:1-11, Monday in Holy Week

June 6 Narrative Criticism

Read: Mark Allan Powell, What Is Narrative Criticism? Chapters one and seven (on reserve)

Powell, "Toward a Narrative-Critical Understanding of Mark,"

Interpretation, October, 1993.

Powell, "Toward a Narrative-Critical Understanding of Matthew,"

Interpretation, October 1997

Recommended: Juel, Master of Surprise, 31-64 (on reserve)

For Discussion: Read Mark 6-8. Pay attention to the portrayal of the disciples in Mark. How would you describe the disciples, according to Mark? How do you respond to them in the story? In your Gospel Parallels, color the parallels to Mark 6-8. Note the differences in how they are portrayed in Matthew and Luke. Assuming that the authors of Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source, what might be some reasons for the changes they make

in the portrayal of the disciples in their stories? How does the differences in the way they portray the disciples affect the story?

Due on Monday:

Write a sermon/homily on one of the following texts. Include a preface in which you identify the critical issues you faced and addressed, either explicitly or implicitly, in moving from text to sermon, such as negative portrayals of Jews or Judaism, Jesus in relationship to Judaism. Identify the contexts, biblical and contemporary, relevant to your sermon. (500 words, which is about two pages, double-spaced)

In preparation for your sermon, consult at least two sermon resources. On a separate page, or at the end of your sermon, indicate how the resources At the end of your sermon write a couple paragraphs indicating how the resources influenced your sermon, either by positive or negative example. Acknowledge sources, printed and electronic. Luke 18:9-14 (RCL Proper 25, Year C)

Luke 10:25-37 (RCL Proper 10, Year C)

Mark 12:28-34 (RCL Proper 26, Year B)

Matthew 5:38-48 (RCL 7th after Epiphany, Year A)

June 9 Reading the Story; Symbols, Metaphors, Literary Devices

June 10 Parables

Read: *The Parables of Jesus*, 7-28; 57-65, 81-113

Gospel Parallels for the parables you read in *The Parables* (color)

June 11 Parables

Read: *The Parables of Jesus*, chapters 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, p. 225

One of the following chapters from *The Parables* Part 3: 21, 23, 27

Write: Consult sermon resources, printed or electronic (at least three) for the parable you chose from *The Parables*, Part 3. How do they differ in their interpretations of the parable from Schottroff's reading? Use Schottroff's guide for "How Should I Read a Gospel Parable?" (p, 225) to help you discern different ways of reading parables. The RCL assigns these parables as follows: Matthew 20:1-16, Proper 20, Year A; Luke 16:19-31, Proper 22, Year C; Luke 11:1-13, Proper 13, Year C; Luke 18:1-8, Proper 24, Year C

June 12 Passion Narratives

Read: *Preaching without Contempt*, chapter 5

New Proclamation for Year C 2007 Advent – Holy Week 234 -236, 239-240, 243-245, 271-275

Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus?*, Prologue (on reserve)

Gospel Parallels, from #239 through #252

June 13 Work with selected texts

June 20 Final Project due. See separate handout.

Policies:

Extensions

The faculty voted to approve the following policy on extensions in April, 1999:

The work for a course is terminated at the end of the final class session. The performance in the course is evaluated on the basis of the work submitted by that time, unless an exception is made by the instructor, in which case a formal petition for extension must be approved by the instructor by the end of the final class session. Extensions (of course work) beyond the end of the semester will be approved only under extraordinary circumstances. Each instructor will include this policy on each course syllabus as well as the criteria by which she or he will grant such an extraordinary exception.

For this course, work for the course must be completed by the end of the term, June 23rd. Extraordinary circumstances include: death in the family, hospitalization for illness or injury, or serious illness of self or family member. If you think you have an extraordinary circumstance which affects your ability to complete the course, please talk with me about it. Please note that all written work, including the final exam, must be completed in order to pass this course.

Sexual Harassment: See Student Handbook

Plagiarism: See Student Handbook

Cell Phones: Turn cell phones off when you come to class.

Guide for Coloring Gospel Parallels

Color the parallel texts using the following color code:

Underline in Red	words found in Mt, Mk, Lk
Underline in Blue	words found in Mt and Mk but not in Lk
Underline in Green	words found in Lk and Mk but not in Mt
Underline in Black	words found in Mt and Lk but not in Mk
Underline in Brown	words in Mk only
Underline in Yellow	words in Mt only
Underline in Orange	words in Lk only

