**BIBLICAL TOOLS**

COMMENTARIES AND BIBLICAL RESOURCES

The interpretive process presumes that you will be your own interpreter, and in a sense your own expert. But you may still want to know what other scholars and experts have said about the text. I recommend going to them only *after* you have done your own “listening to the text with imagination.” Then you may want to consult some of the various commentaries and study Bibles. Here are some I've found useful.

1. *Feasting on the Word* (a RCL-based commentary series. Each text is explored from the four perspectives—the biblical, the theological, the homiletical, and the pastoral)
2. *Harper’s Bible Commentary* (One Volume)
3. *The Anchor Bible Series* (a commentary series focused on historical and philological criticisms)
4. *Interpretation: A Bible commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (a collaborative work of biblical scholars and homileticians)
5. *The (New) Interpreter’s Bible*
6. *The Westminster Bible Companion*
7. *Global Bible Commentary*
8. *Hermeneia* (a commentary series focused on literary criticism)
9. *Sacra Pagina* (a Roman Catholic Bible commentary)
10. *Women’s Bible Commentary (Revised)*

On-line Lectionary Resources”

1. www.festivalofhomiletics.com
2. Living Pulpit (pulpit.org)
3. Workingpreacher.org
4. Textweek.com

BIBLE VERSIONS

It is important to compare a number of translations of the texts. If possible, have some of the following available for your study:

KJV = King James Version  
RSV (46) = Revised Standard Version (1946)  
RSV (72) = Revised Standard Version (1972)  
NRSV = New Revised Standard Version  
NIV = New International Version  
TEV = Today's English Version  
JB = Jerusalem Bible  
NEB = New English Bible

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CRITICISMS FOR PREACHING

1. Historical-critical Methods
2. Historical Criticism: Who was the author of the text? Where was the text written? When was the text written? For which situation was the text written?
3. Philological Criticism: What are the key words on which this text revolves? How would the listeners or readers to whom this text was originally addressed have heard these words? How can we translate these words in our contemporary words, without reducing their original meanings?
4. Form Criticism: What is the form of this text? What was the function of the form in the ancient community? Does the form of the text suggest a form for the sermon?
5. Redaction Criticism: Can we identify the approximate shape of the text before it reached the author’s hand? How has the author reshaped the tradition? Does the literary context cast light on the interpretation of the text by the redactor? Which passage comes before? What comes after? What is the effect of the placement of the text?
6. Structuralism: What is the basic plot of the text? What is the situation at the beginning and end of the text? What kind of transformation takes place as the text moves from beginning to end?
7. Sociological Criticism: What was the social position of the community to which the text was addressed? Does the text or background reading suggest that an aspect of social history might be important to the interpretation of the text? Is the congregation to which the sermon will be preached in a social position that is similar or dissimilar to that of the community to which the text was originally addressed?
8. Canonical Criticism: What was the function of this text in the community to which it was addressed? Does the text confirm or call for a reform of the present situation of the community?
9. Literary-critical Methods
10. New Literary Criticism: what is the literary genre of the text? Why did the author use this particular literary genre?
11. Narrative Criticism: What is the setting of the story? How does the story unfold its plot (a deep and surface structure of the story)? What are the functions of the characters in the story? How does an event(s) occur in the story? How is the event arranged in chronological order (liner, spiral, etc.)?
12. Rhetorical Criticism: What is the character of the author (“implied author”)? How does the author try to persuade his/her audience? What kind of communicative methods does the author use? How do we experience the dynamics between the author and the original audience?
13. Performance Criticism: How can the text be performed as a way to experience a new meaning of the text? Can the text be presented (performed) without violating the truthfulness of the performer’s presence (persona)?