Preaching in Christian Communities

**The Interpretive Process for Sermon #1 (Story-telling Preaching)**

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**Prayerful Preparation**. Biblical interpretation for preaching begins with prayerful preparation through which the preacher prepares to hear the text with a faithful heart. Through prayer, the preacher invokes the Holy Spirit to be present and work with her throughout the whole process of interpretation.

Write down your prayers: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Select a biblical story or a parable by your own choice and reflect on it as follows:**

1. Read the story in at least three different versions, and imagine the scene of the biblical text in your mind. Who and what do you see in the scene? Who and what do you hear? Which character in the scene is the most interesting to you?

Does the story include an image that has deep significance for you? If so, what do you feel by that? What do you smell or see? What do you remember or envision by this image?

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1. Do you have any grammatical, philological, literary, or historical questions in the story? Refer to commentaries and biblical dictionaries.

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1. Stand in “the shoes” of your congregation and reflect on the story. Are there any hidden parts in the story that your congregation might question or be curious about? Try to retrieve them by using your imagination.

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1. Do you remember any contemporary stories, images, or experiences in relation to your biblical story? How do they relate to it?

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1. What does the story tell you and your congregation? In other words, what would be the focus statement of your sermon? Articulate it in 1-2 sentences.

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1. Retell or paraphrase your biblical story in the way that your focus statement can be communicated, following one of the four styles of narrative preaching introduced in Eugene Lowry’s *How to Preach a Parable*.
2. What is the theological theme conveyed by your story-telling? How does it function in your story-telling preaching? In other words, what would be the function statement of your sermon (e.g., To teach? To encourage? To comfort?). Articulate it in 1-2 sentences.

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