

the essence of
BIBLICAL 
PREACHING

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CENTRAL BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SESSION 2

THEOCENTRIC & PNEUMATOLOGICAL PREACHING

AN EVALUATION

1. Theocentric Preaching

A. Proponents

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B. Definition

Theocentric preaching is preaching that keeps God at the heart of every sermon.

C. Description

- *First, some proponents of God-centered preaching find their _____.*
- *Second, proponents of God-centered preaching emphasize what scripture says about the “glory” of God (e.g., 1 Cor 10:31, Phil 2:9–11).*

D. Strengths

- *First, theocentric preaching uniquely emphasizes the Father’s role in the gospel.*
- *Second, theocentric preaching draws attention to the Father’s role in Biblical theology.*

Langley writes, “I want to insist that God is the main character of the story. His is the eternal decree, his is the love that drew salvation’s plan, his is the initiative in sending the Son, his is the power that raised Christ from the dead and put all things under his feet. ‘To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever (Eph 3:21 NIV).”⁶ He says it more concisely here, “Everything else—election, judgment, redemption—is penultimate; the glory of God is ultimate.”⁷ This type of thinking can be found in the *Baptist Faith and Message* as well. It describes the central figure of the Bible as Christ, but it also declares that its central goal is “God supreme in a redeemed universe.”⁸

Third, God-centered preaching follows Jesus’s preaching model.

E. Weaknesses/Dangers

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⁶ Kenneth J. Langley, “Response to Bryan Chapell,” in *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today*, 35.

⁷ Langley, “Theocentric View,” in *Homiletics and Hermeneutics*, 89.

⁸ Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 22.

2. Pneumatological Preaching

A. Proponents

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B. Definition

Pneumatological preaching emphasizes the Holy Spirit's role in preaching. Various positions of Pneumatological preaching include Spirit-centered and Spirit-empowered preaching.

C. Description

- *First, proponents of Pneumatological preaching suggest that the Spirit is often neglected in contemporary views of preaching.*
- *Second, some proponents of Spirit-centered preaching say that this form of preaching requires Christ-centeredness as its prerequisite.*

D. Strengths

- *First, Pneumatological preaching reminds us to expect God to work*
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- *Second, Pneumatological preaching recognizes the Spirit's involvement with Scripture.*

John Piper says, "The chief and ultimate aims of preaching are impossible apart from the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. Without his supernatural work, neither the preacher nor the people can see or savor the beauty and worth of God."⁹

- *Third, Pneumatological preaching acknowledges the significant work that the Spirit performs in preaching.*

E. Weaknesses/Dangers

- *First, just because the Spirit is involved with preaching does not mean that we should center or focus all sermons on Him.*
- *Second, Spirit-centered preaching can be guilty of forcing the Spirit into Biblical texts not meant to emphasize His ministry.*
- *Third, proponents of Pneumatological preaching sometimes lack clarity regarding the definition and use of important terms (e.g., filling, anointing, unction, etc.).*

⁹ John Piper, *Expository Exultation: Christian Preaching as Worship*, 105.