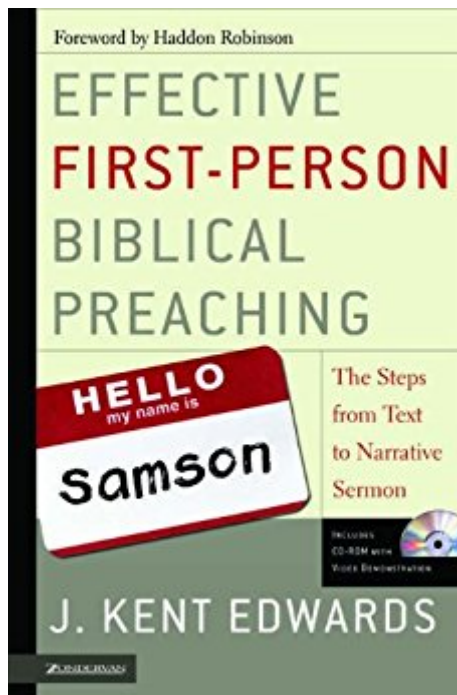




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# Effective First-Person Biblical Preaching: The Steps From Text To Narrative Sermon



## Synopsis

**The Steps from Text to Narrative Sermon** Presenting biblically centered sermons in a new, creative genre. Pastors and teachers are always on the lookout for new ways to expand the effectiveness of their preaching. Sermons delivered in the first-person point of view can weave the power of story and drama into the biblical teaching, making familiar and not-so-familiar characters and situations come to life. This book helps students and pastors understand how first-person sermons can be preached with biblical integrity. It extends Haddon Robinson's "big idea" philosophy of preaching to this new genre. J. Kent Edwards takes a practical approach as he walks readers through the steps needed for creating sermons that are faithful to the text and engaging to the listener. Examples and worksheets enable readers to apply this unique approach to one of their own sermons. The book includes a CD-ROM with a video sample of first-person narrative preaching.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In *Effective First-Person Biblical Preaching* Kent Edwards gives the preacher another tool on his tool belt. A couple of quick takeaways before my review: This is a primer for anyone who have never taken into consideration the nature of narrative literature in their preaching. After reading this and other books recently for my Dmin degree, I realize I have preached narrative passages like epistles in the past. Second, this book is not just on first person preaching but on narrative preaching. Edwards starts in chapter one arguing for first-person preaching by giving cultural, educational, theological reasons, and emotional reasons. The eight ways in which people process information was insightful in seeing how this type of sermon can engage audiences who have different learning preferences. In chapter three, *“Determining The Story’s Structure: Step 3, the Mono-Mythic Cycle* gave me a greater awareness of the structure of stories and plot development. In chapter four, *“What Comes Next? Steps 4 through 8,* Edwards helps the reader analyze the different parts that make up a story. I have preached through several narrative sections in over twenty five years of ministry and I now see that I could have developed more thoroughly the characters, their interaction, and their inner life. Step six, *“State the Big Idea of the Narrative* is also a helpful section. With the help of reading this book and some others recently, I now see that my big ideas in the past have been exegetical ideas. Since the reading I am simplifying my big idea down to a homiletical and then a preaching idea. The four questions in the section entitled, *“Double check your big idea,* are helpful, but I would add, *“does your big idea fit through the filter of both biblical and systematic theology.* I think it is helpful for people to see and understand the difference between the two disciplines. Lastly, *“Step 8 Make the application,* Edwards drives home the point that narrative has one idea and therefore must be organized around that one controlling idea to achieve a single purpose in the lives of the listener. The following chapter, *“Taking the First Steps in the Homiletical Task* helps the preacher identify and develop a protagonist which requires one to get into the mind of the character. Although one can create their own character that listeners can identify with, it is preferable to stay with biblical characters. With the lack of biblical illiteracy in the church it seems best to stay as true to the story as possible. Every good story must not only have a protagonist but also a rival, an antagonist, so the author gives three helpful principles for effective antagonists. Antagonists are more powerful than the protagonist, they are people, and they are designed for their protagonists. Moving to chapter six, *“Completing the Homiletical Task,* Edwards informs us that

characters need to be brought to life by means of a journey of faith that supports and brings home the big idea of the story. Then in step 6, *Plotting the action*, we are told that the plot must crown the big idea in such a way that everything else is subservient to this big idea. Edwards reminds us that this type of preaching is not a lecture so the preacher must increase tension in the story line by introducing conflict but not give too much information nor long speeches; truth is displayed in the story and not explicitly in teaching it. When it comes to writing the sermon manuscript, Step 9, the authors suggest that the preacher present the preaching idea as forcefully and clearly as possible so as to leave no room for misunderstanding. After reading *Step 12 Block your sermon* I hope to do some more reading on blocking to better understand it. Chapter seven, *Practical Questions about First-Person Preaching*, offers practical suggestions to those who have never preached a first-person sermon. The easiest and simplest way to introduce this type of preaching is morphing into first-person preaching. In the last chapter of the book, *Alternatives to First-Person Preaching*, Edwards gives several other options to narrative preaching in addition to first-person preaching. The second appendix has helpful worksheets; I only wish they were available in PDF form!

This is an excellent resource for understanding and applying solid practice for developing strong, local messages through first person narrative preaching.

This book is an excellent resource for everyone who is involved in the delivery of sermons. Young preachers can develop a good habit by following the recommended steps in their development of first-person narrative sermons. The steps described are useful analytical tools for narrative passages. Hence, even if the sermon method employed ends up not being a first-person approach, the sermon preparation can still benefit from the analytical tools described in this book. Seasoned preachers looking for a fresh way of preaching narratives can also benefit from this book by understanding more about first-person preaching.

Received what I expected and on time

thanks

Edwards' observes that preachers often get locked into one genre of Scripture (usually epistle) or

one style of preaching (didactic). Yet most of Scripture is written in a narrative format. In order to be true to the genre of the inspired Word, the author contends that narrative texts should be preached in a narrative style. In addition to this theological argument, there is also a pragmatic one: our culture has become so story-driven that sermons without stories will probably fail to communicate to contemporary listeners. Having laid the philosophical basis for his position, Edwards enumerates the exegetical steps one must take in order to preach narrative, as well as the homiletical process of preparing a first-person narrative sermon. The book ends with a couple of chapters that answer common questions and provide some alternatives to first-person preaching. The appendices contain three sample sermons and five worksheets to aid in the process. Edwards makes an impassioned case for first-person narrative preaching. Yet I came away less than sanguine about the approach. I have a difficult time with the level of creativity that is inherent to this type of preaching, particularly when it comes to altering the biblical plot, creating point-of-view characters out of thin air, and portraying the emotions or psychology of characters (which Scripture seldom does). For instance, Edwards says, "If the plot you are planning to preach is identical to the plot used by the biblical writer, you can be fairly sure that you need to do some more work on your plot. Only on very rare occasions should you simply 'rerun the story.' Almost always it should be modified" (p.96). Statements like that make me squirm a bit. If it is not in the Bible or at least a reasonable inference from the Bible, then I am uncomfortable with making it up. How do I know whether I am being faithful to the actual events or importing my own ideas? If the biblical character whom I am portraying witnessed my sermon, would he be saying, "No! That's not how it was at all!" or "You have me all wrong!" So I have some philosophical objections to first-person narrative preaching, at least as espoused by Edwards. With that said, much of what Edwards advocates on the homiletical side still applies to third-person narrative preaching--an approach with which I am much more comfortable. Like the first-person approach, third-person narrative preaching involves: selecting the appropriate text; isolating the "big idea

Liked it all except for acting it out. Not my thing

The book did not come with the CD-ROM that was promised in the product description "The book includes a CD-ROM with a video sample of first-person narrative preaching." Not sure why I had to pay the amount I did when I received half of what was promised.

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